PUT ON THE SPOT

JACK LAIT

Harold Stephens

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BY

JACK LAIT

AUTHOR OF

THE BIG HOUSE

GROSSET & DUNLAP

PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

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Made in the United States of America

To Laura

of the gentle face and gentle ways
who sat beside me as I wrote most
of this rough, tough tale.

J. L.

PUT ON THE SPOT

CHAPTER I

THE Edgewater Kid never knew what hit him. Like the cleat against the teeth on the dog of a ferryboat windlass running free, came a metallic, ratcheting rattling. Angry flashes of flame spat from a window across the narrow street. In the near distance a church bell tolled.

Two minutes later there was a curious crowd at the doorstep of the house where the Kid had lived. And Polack Annie was on her knees on the bloody sidewalk, raising her quivering hands on high and calling on the saints. The Kid had been her man.

A harness bull, club waving in one hand and with his other tearing at his service gun somewhere under the tails of his service coat, panted up, shouldering all aside. For him they made way, all but Polack Annie, who was blubbering maudlin supplications and swaying.

"Who knows anything about this?" bellowed the bull.

Nobody spoke. Then a small man with glasses on and no coat, who had run out of a near-by dwelling at the sound of the machine gun fire, pompously squirmed forward, pointed down at the riddled remains huddled in a crazy and shapeless heap, and stage whispered:

"The Edgewater Kid!"

"Oh," said the cop, "then you know somethin', do you? What's your name?"

"Now, look here, officer. I don't want to get into any trouble—can't afford it. I'm with an insurance company—taxpayer—own my own home——"

"Don' talk back to me. An' don' move."

The bluecoat yanked out a whistle and cut the Sabbath stillness. He fished up a notebook and made a memo of the time, the street number, the date.

"Who else knows anything about this?" he demanded. No one spoke up. He stepped over the carcass of the murdered gangster and shook Annie by the shoulder.

"What do you know about this?" he bawled.

"Go 'way—go 'way," she yammered.

"Aw, yeh? You're goin' for a buggy ride, redhead—ah, here they come."

On the run from three directions three other officers were clumping it on the lam. Carney, the first on the scene, with rights of priority as well as assignment, for this was on his beat, ordered the others about sharply.

"Hey, there, Quinlan—call the station an' report a homicide—said to be the Edgewater Kid—5:52 P.M., Sund'y, August farth, front o' fifty-far-fifty-nine Putnam Aven'e . . . call for the amb'lance an' the wagon . . . here, you, Finkel, take charge o' this here man an' that there jenny—material witnesses—you, Van Haven, keep them people back—I'm goin' in the house an' see who's what the hell."

Quinlan shuffled off to the box; Finkel seized the little man, deaf to his entreaties, threats and whimpers, and dragged Polack Annie up on her feet. Her knees buckled and he slung an arm around her and held her up. Carney started up the steps. Van Haven called him:

"Say, hadn't you better take a peek acrost over there—that's where batt'ries was concealed."

Carney wheeled sharply about and came

down. In a protruding open bay window on the second story of a frame building, a boarding house, stood in easy view a regulation army machine gun, its muzzle pointed square at the spot where he stood. He jumped aside. He waddled across the street and to the house. People from within and without were already jammed around the door.

"Who knows anything about that cannon up there?" he screamed.

A stout, middle-aged woman squeezed forth.

"I run this place," she volunteered. "I rented that room a week ago yest'd'y to two men—I didn't know nothin' about no guns—nothin' till I heard them weird noises, officer—I swear——"

"Put on your hat. You can do your swearin' at the station . . . anybody else here know anything about this sweet doin's—an' on a Sund'y, too—is they?"

The siren of the police ambulance stopped all else. Around the corner, on two wheels, against the traffic lights, it shot as though it, too, had been projected out of a "cannon." A few yards behind, its gong beater banging, sped the patrol wagon. It yanked up on its emergency brakes and vomited a squad of eight uniformed men,

two plainclothes dicks and a sleepy reserve lieutenant. The case was out of Carney's hands from now on.

In the backroom of a dummy garage on North Royal Street, opposite one of the northernmost walkways into the park, sat a well set-up man with a gold cigarette lighter in his hand. He snapped it shut and slid it back into his pocket on its gold chain. He crossed his knees and one trouser leg crawled up, disclosing a gold garter buckle. From his vest he fished up a gold pencil and drummed with it against a gold ring on his left fourth finger.

"I told you them hyenas had the Kid on the spot."

And as he spoke he revealed a gold tooth.

"Peace be unto the souls o' the rats what got 'im," solemnly spoke a tall, handsomely built young man in natty chauffeur's togs. "We'll give 'em the same up-an'-up they give the Kid, eh, Goldie?"

"Sand, Ray—sand!" cautioned Goldie. "This calls for some noodle."

"You mean—you don' mean we're gonna let them West Side goofers get away with this? This ain' like the rest o' the jobs. This ain'

business. This is plain murder," cried a wiry, monkey-faced little fellow in ready-made dark clothes.

"Exact'y, Chimp. Murder. And murder ain't our racket."

"Since when?" chirped a blond youngster, who might have passed as a college junior.

"Since all the time," said Goldie, as he stowed away the gold pencil, went down into his pants pocket and came up with five twenty-dollar gold pieces, which he shuffled in one hand dexterously. "We knock 'em off, yes. That's part o' the routine. We got to operate. Big industry does the same thing—if competition won't merge to stay on the reservation, well, what are all the gat factories runnin' for? Nations act and react the same way. That's strictly legit. But this? Well, they say in the olden days there was a war over a dame. But in these days! We're civilized!"

The group of ten sat dumfounded. Then Chimp arose and said:

"Okay, chief. If you say no, you mean no. So this here won' be official, if you know what I mean. But I'm goin' out an' croak the scums what butchered my pal, the Edgewater Kid, if I have to chase 'em ninety t'ousan' miles an'

shoot 'em in a church. You say this ain' business. All right—it'll be pleasure."

Goldie shifted the five gold pieces to his other hand and shuffled them.

"That would pop up a lot of hell," mused Goldie, his eyes toward the ceiling. "If you go through, Kinky King'll put the finger on you. Then there'll be plenty Fourth o' July. The whole back an' forth starts all over again—after I promised the Mayor there wouldn' be any more inter-gang warfare in Chicago if I had anything to say or do about it."

"So did Kinky promise. Him for the Wes' Side, you for the Nort' an' Hannibal for the Sout' Side—all shakes dukes on it—an' now what? Who welched on the deal? We didn'. Hannibal's mob didn'. But that chiselin', cheatin' swill-box skimmer, Kinky King, has the Kid massacred wit' a typewriter in broad daylight in front o' his own home an' on the day o' rest. If we let 'em pull that raw work on us an' live, Kinky'll strut in here an' stick you up for them double sawbuck slugs you're jugglin'. Chief, you're gettin' soft."

Goldie flipped the gold pieces, all five of them, back to his right hand, and with the left he flung away his gold-tipped butt. He took

out a gold cigarette case, extracted a smoke, lit it with his gold lighter, put that back, adjusted the gold clasp that anchored his wide substantial cravat, and said:

"If you figger I'm gettin' soft, I'll come over there and knock you loose from your Adam's apple, you queer-lookin' imbecile. And what's more, if you go on any private huntin' trips, I'll blow a tunnel in you so big they'll drive your own hearse through it . . . that goes for you an' the rest o' Goldie Gorio's boys . . . an' that's that!"

Goldie arose. He slipped his gold pieces back where they lived. He produced a gold-backed comb and ran it through his massive black hair. He put on a Panama hat with a fancy band in which gold predominated a four-color combination. He picked up a gold-headed cane.

"Come on, Ray," he ordered. "I'm goin' to the station an' spring Polack Annie. We owe her that. I'll go her bond. She won't let out a squawk, anyway. Nobody'll ever take a fall for this jam . . . same old coroner's carbon copy: 'Came to his death by hands unknown.' Just another one o' the Northside Cubs tagged off second base. Just another

laugh for the New York papers. Nobody cares —much . . . come on, Ray."

Goldie Gorio entered his limousine. The hardware was of solid gold. The radiator, the handles, the window turners, the vanity set, the smokers' paraphernalia, the instrument board, even the foot bar—all of gold. On the door, in gold, was a scroll. It read "GOLDIE."

Through the glass windows ran a network of solid and thick wires—of gold. Bullet-proof. The walls and roof of the custom-built and art-designed body were lined with sheet steel—the only base metal he stooped to.

The car pulled up before a murky, time-beaten and weather-worn public building. Goldie entered and remained fifteen minutes. When he came forth he nodded to Ray. His next stop was a precinct station. He sauntered in, gave the police reporters and the desk sergeant a golden smile. The sergeant went to the foot of the stairs and shouted up:

"Okay on Annie."

Goldie scrutinized a blank already filled in.

"Twenty-five grand?" he asked, with upraised eyebrows.

"That's what the State's Attorney picked out," apologized the sergeant.

"Don't let it worry you—it won' worry me," chortled Goldie.

He unclipped a fountain pen of gold and scratched a signature. By then a matron came down and beside her, now rouged and lipsticked and tidied, but wild-eyed and not quite steady, trod Polack Annie.

A gorgeously beautiful girl she was. No beefy, red-handed, coarse-ankled side-street peasant, transplanted from native surroundings where she might have been picturesque to slums where she could only be another cow from the stockyards runway, was she—no, not Annie.

She might have been twenty-one. Her skin had the bloom of youth on the olive tint of her passionate face. Her eyes were blue and large and liquid. Her slender face narrowed to a delicate and sensitive chin. Her lips were ripe and full and animated. Her figure was feminine yet virile, adolescent yet voluptuous. And under her cocky little hat fell ringlets of blazing red hair. To her circle everybody in Central Europe was a Polack—and so they nicknamed her.

The reporters closed in on her. But Goldie

was already busy playing trained interference.

"Nix, boys," he warned, not roughly but with decision. "The poor kid's all shot—I mean, all bothered up, naturally. She has nothin' to say."

He took her by one firm, shapely arm, and half led and half pushed her through the door, over the walk and into his car, the door of which Ray held open. The door clicked shut with that sound of authority that only the door of a costly car can register. Goldie, his back to it, turned and radiated on the boys.

"Now, what can I do for you?" he asked amiably.

Four camera men, who had been given notice, ground their teeth. They knew what they had caught in that run across the sidewalk—one shoe of Polack Annie as Goldie had whisked her by, shielding her from the lenses with his own form. They took it out on him now by snapping him again and some more.

And at this he beamed benignly.

"Shoot," he chuckled. "I'm not scared o' your guns—the only kind that hurt me are typewriters—I mean the newspapermen's, of course."

The reporters quizzed him—what did he know

about the motive behind the assassination of the Edgewater Kid? Whom did he suspect? Was it the Kinky King outfit? How come, since the three rum gangs had certified an armistice and cessation of hostilities? Was the whole old-time bloody business begun all over again?

"One at a time," interrupted Goldie. "I have no idea who took the Kid—no more than what I read in the papers about two mysterious strangers who rented that room, smuggled that machine gun up in sections, set it up and laid for him and let him have it—no idea! Can't imagine why any more than I can who. Haven't heard much about Kinky or his crowd for weeks—no cause I know of why they should want the Kid—he was such a peaceful young fellow, anyway.

"If there is to be any lawlessness, it surely won't be from anybody I have any connection with."

One of them spoke up:

"You mean—no reprisals? No payoff for the Edgewater Kid?"

"Certainly not—no payoff. My word on that—no payoff."

And he entered his car, the lever slid into gear, a faint puff of smoke belched from the

gold exhaust—and Goldie's famous limousine disappeared around a corner.

That night, on the floor of his liaison apartment, was found the still warm body of Kinky King, boss of the West Side gang.

In it there were six bullets.

Beside it lay a magazine revolver—of gold!

CHAPTER II

"The Devil's Hall."

A wise buddy by the name of Jake Klingstein got the big idea—that even the men and women of the underworld wanted a little privacy. So he opened a joint that started to deal at three o'clock in the morning, when the suckers' hang-outs closed.

It had a lookout slot in the iron door. The signal was two short raps and three long ones. If you tried any other combination, no go. If you hit it right, the slide was pushed back, a pair of eyes gave you the once over, and if you belonged you came in; if you didn't, there wasn't enough dough to get you past—the district had plenty places where a sappio could spend his jack. This was for regulars—or no count.

If you got past that portal, you stepped into a tiny lobby. Across it, knocking your eye out, was a sign. It occupied the whole wall. And it probably saved forty murders in "The Devil's Hall." It read:

The Woman You Take in Is the Woman You Take Out

Four weeks or so before the machine gun let go and expunged the Edgewater Kid he walked into the dive. Beside him, looking radiant, was Polack Annie.

The Kid checked his hat. The girl nodded and smiled—not too broadly, mind you, because that was a place where people observed their ethics. But she smiled, because the Kid was a sweet tipper. Annie smiled too—because she knew he was hers. She didn't mind him smiling at other girls. The pride of possession was strong within her. She loved to see other girls look adoringly at her Kid. She knew they knew—that he belonged to her. And he did.

They walked in. Annie had what the Kid used to call an impromptu complexion—she made it up as she went along. She was always making up. She who never had to, always did. But that was the fashion around those corners.

They nodded to a few friends. They were "downtown"—neutral territory. No Man's Land! Gang lines didn't go there—anybody's playground. And among those they saw was Kinky King.

Kinky's swarthy, stubble-blacked pan went dark. The deep circles about his burning eyes turned deeper. He shook himself, smiled to the windblown-bobbed blonde beside him and giggled. He lit her a cigarette and kept his back turned. But Kinky burned.

Polack Annie had been his.

Kinky was past forty. He had a drag that would have brought down City Hall, and a punch that would have knocked it down. He was the undisputed monarch of the West Side gang. Aldermen, sheriffs, assistant state's attorneys, jury commissioners, jailers, marshalls, county commissioners—they were working for Kinky King.

And this stooge, this vassal of Goldie Gorio, had stolen his woman. The Edgewater Kid had violated the law of the "Devil's Hall" and had copped Polack Annie. He had lived to walk out with her. And he had the impertinence to bring her back there. And everybody was wise. Many a side glance was angled at Kinky King. And he knew why.

The blonde beside him was hep, too. She slanted the side plays. Kinky got it. He leaned across and said to her:

"That fresh punk—he'll do good, he will."

She rubbed some rouge on her lips. She chanced a flash at the Kid.

"He's a good-lookin' boy, ain't he?" she observed.

"Bullets," said Kinky, dryly, "have no sense o' beauty. They don' know are they goin' into a damn fool what's good-lookin' or not. I'll say one thing for 'em—they do go where they're sent. Bullets don't fall in love."

The blonde sighed. She looked at the Kid again.

"I guess I ain' no bullet," she said, half aside.

"No?" pursued Kinky. "How'd you like a swell sock right in that pug nose o' your'n, you two-timin' umpchay?"

"Aw, no—nothin' like that, Kinky," she covered up. "But—he sure is a han'some feller."

"It'll never do you no good—get that from headquarters. Pour me a shoot—no, make it a man's size—I ain't no pansy . . . that's it—now take an earful o' this: You think that bozo looks good, do you? Well, you ain't the firs' broad what did. But you're about the last, get me?"

"Whatya mean?"

"Nothin'—I ain't gonna answer you—but pay some attention to what I tell you—that shiny-haired Mick wouldn' keep his nose clean. He's lousy with youth an' spoiled by twists—like you—who tell him how good lookin' he is, when they could do better spendin' their time tellin' me how good lookin' I am.

"So it up an' went to his head. They was plenty o' room there 'cause they was nothin' else to inde'fere. The floozies flop for him. It's his America. An' he loves it. So he goes off his simple nut. He forgets who he is an' who a lot o' other parties is.

"I've saw a flock o' Edgewater Kids come an' go. You seen him come. I'll see him go!"

The blonde lit a smoke.

"You—you mean—you're goin' to have that nice boy tooken?"

"Tooken, hell! This here is a big burg. But it ain' big enough for him an' me both. They'll pat him in the pan wit' a spade. An' on the handle'll be inscribed 'Kinky King.' I'm plastered, or I wouldn' let you in on this. An' if you open that kissy trap o' your'n, I'll run you into the lake an' walk you out till your hat floats. Right?"

"Right," she responded, promptly.

"Right is right. Take a good squint at him, if he registers so hot wit' you. You won' see him long. He's carbolic acid to my guts. Goldie Gorio is s'posed to be there an' know somethin'. But he nurses boobs like that. He's a good guy, that Goldie. I like him. But he's a hog for half-baked saps like this one. I don' wanna open up the old trouble. But nobody's gonna hand me that rabbit-punch an' tell his relations about it. I'm Kinky King. An' don't you never forgit it. That name, King, must o' come t'rough the ages not for no good reason . . . an' that pretty-faced bootlegger better start singin' a hymn. Does that sink in your dome? Or does blonde hair defy wind, rain an' the human voice?"

She bent forward.

"Please, Kinky," she pleaded, "you know your own mind an' you know your own game. But why take it so hard?"

"Becus' that's the way I wanna take it."

"But—you're goin' to chance a tough rap an' pull down the whole Goldie Gorio gang on you besides. For what?"

"They'll be no rap. If Goldie can't keep his yeggs in line, I can. . . . He trots her here—in the Devil's Hall—to play me for a laugh—

me! Say, if it wasn't we all got a gen'leman's agreement not to get pers'nal in here, I'd settle him right now——"

"Oh, no—Kinky—not in here!"

"Don' keep tellin' me what not to do an' when not to do it. I laid out better men 'n him before you was born."

CHAPTER III

Polack Annie sat on a cushion at the feet of the Edgewater Kid. She turned her big, opalescent eyes upward. They lit with passionate pride at what they took in. The Kid was a handsome thing.

"Kid," she breathed, "I never knew what love was till I met you."

He stroked her fiery hair. He purred. He relaxed and drew deep upon his cigarette.

"Kid," she sighed, "I wish I'd never met Kinky King."

"If you hadn't," he puffed, "you prob'ly never would o' met me."

"I mean I wish I could o' met you an' never o' met him. He's a wicked baby, that Kinky. He's tough, boy—he's plenty tough."

"I've met a few what are tough, sugar—an' my experience with 'em has been that when it comes right down to a show-down, you hit 'em in the mush with a cream puff an' you pick 'em up with a sponge."

She looked alarmed.

"Oh, honey—don't rate Kinky in that class. He's a killer. He'd knock off his brother an' never turn to spit. When he was givin' you an' the rest o' Goldie Gorio's mob the works, man, I was with him—I know."

"We trimmed him, didn't we?"

"No—I don't think youse did—it was about give an' take."

"Oh, was it? When Goldie an' us was barricaded in our headquarters him an' his yeller outfit, twelve cars strong, shot by at fifty miles an hour an' turned loose typewriters on us an' riddled the buildin'—an' croaked a woman an' a kid on the sidewalk—an' kep' on steppin' —I don' call that tough."

"Oh, no? That's tough enough for me. Jus' becus he's that kind o' rat what takes as few chances for himself as he can an' mows down anybody what's in his way in some such manner as this, is why I say he's dangerous . . . oh, Kid, watch out—take care o' yourself—take no chances—if anything happened to you——"

The Edgewater Kid chuckled.

"Gee," he said, "it's fine to have you care that much. But don't let it worry one red hair o' your sweet dome, babe. They ain' takin' the Edgewater Kid for no rides. I'm too fast for

'em. An' they know in their crooked hearts that if anything happens to me, Goldie an' my buddies'll clean 'em out like the inside of a fish. Kinky's takin' down a flock o' jack. He's got the whole West Side. He's ridin' easy an' sittin' pretty. He ain' suckin' aroun' for no trouble—least of all with Goldie."

She shook her head slowly, solemnly.

"You don' know him, Kid—I tell you, you don' know him. He lushes his own stuff. He don' handle the real McCoy. He shoves that Wop bathtub slop. An' he guzzles it, himself. An' when he swills up a bellyful o' that hog-wash, he goes cookoo. He bulldozes his boys an' there ain't a one of 'em peeps back at him. I tell you, when he's that way he ain't human."

"A hunk o' lead don' know the diff'rence, beautiful, whether a man is cockeyed or sober, or if he's tire tread or putty. They never made one yet so tough he could shed bullets."

"I know—I know. If he gets you, they'll get him. But what good'll that do me? I don't want revenge. I don' want nothin'—nothin' but you—you—that's all——"

"Well, what you bleatin' about? You got me, ain't you?"

"But," and she scrambled on her knees and

embraced his thighs and buried her head in his chest, "I want you always—forever—you—just you—for me—with me—and, oh, Kid my lover, I'm so scared—so worried——"

He kissed the top of her head.

"Aw, bottle it," he urged, tenderly enough. "Didn' I tell you there's nothing to lose sleep about? I'm watchin' myself. You been with me now seven weeks. Nobody's made a pass at me, ain't you?"

"Did you see the face on Kinky t'-night, when he saw us come in the Devil's Hall?"

The Kid broke into a choking laughter.

"Did I? Not much. Say, he torched. I thought he was gonna pull his rod an' open up right then an' there . . . when he didn't, I knew he was doggin' it. I had my hand on my gat, ready to duck under the table an' shoot it out with him if he made one false pass. He was sizzlin'—but he took it out shootin' off his pan to that blond bozo with him. I bet he was handin' her a hot line. She kep' slantin' me, too, all the time——"

"Yes—I noticed that myself. She better look out, or there'll be some artillery from this end. She copped Kinky from a jane twice as

good lookin' as herself. That kind o' larceny is her duck soup."

The Kid giggled and scratched her head.

"Nobody's stealin' me from you, mamma—an' nobody's shootin' me out o' your arms, neither. This here combination is set. Ain't that enough?"

"It's enough—oh, it's too much," she said, quivering and straining him to her.

In Kinky King's costly, garish apartment over a slovenly barber shop, the exterior of which scarcely conveyed a suspicion that within was the habitat, the executive mansion, the playhouse and the retreat of the West Side liquor monarch, King was stamping up and down the carpet. His coat and vest lay on the floor where he had flung them. His collar was open wide and his tie flapped and floated freely as he paced.

Seated together were two of his scoundrels, "Bite" Ferrone and "Pinky" Shapiro. Ferrone was short and massive, muscular, powerful and brutal. Shapiro looked anæmic, his cheeks caved in and his frame emaciated. His complexion had the flush of consumption.

King staggered as he strode. His florid countenance proclaimed him drunk if his unsteady gait missed the eye. His fists were closed, his eyes were almost closed, his chest bobbed up and down as he panted and exploded.

"I want that Edgewater Kid," he roared. "If youse two can croak him an' not be tipped off, okay; if youse can't, do it anyways."

Shapiro rubbed his thin chin.

"But—why?" he ventured to inquire.

"Because I say so—an' they ain' no better reason!"

Ferrone offered no argument.

"I'll put it up to the boys," he said, "an' we'll dope out the best system. Maybe we can get away wit' it clean. The Kid lives in a kind o' lonely neighborhood. O' course, it's as much as our life is worth, any of us, to have Goldie ketch us on the Nort' Side——"

"Well? You've took chances before, haven't you? If you want a safe an' simple life an' wanna raise kids an' whiskers, go back shinin' shoes."

"Oh, I ain't crawfishin', boss—I'm jus' goin' over the ground. Maybe it'd be better to double-team the Kid downtown——"

"You're crazy," interrupted Shapiro. "We'll put a trailer on the Kid, get the low-down on his habits, an' plant a typewriter—if Hymie Weiss could be got that way, the Edgewater Kid could."

"I don't care if you stick a pineapple under him or tear him to pieces wit' your own hands. I don' care if you do it in the woods or in City Hall. But—get me action. Have a drink."

He gurgled out half a tumbler for each of them. Shapiro threw his down, and his meager body bobbed under it like a ship hit by a breaker. Ferrone dispatched his neatly. King braced his big feet and drained his glass, after which he pitched it into the fireplace, where it smashed to bits. He spat.

"The Edgewater Kid! It's a fine set-up when that kind o' penny-ante split-case bootleggers start pullin' fast ones on Kinky King," he growled. "If a dame is pin-headed enough not to know nothin' that's rough enough. But when one o' Goldie Gorio's stooges puts her up to it, gets away wit' it, an' tosses it in my puss besides—say, they can burn me in the chair before I let that kind o' punks hijack my woman an' die of old age."

"I—I don' blame you at all," effused Shapiro, half-heartedly. "I'd do the same in the same place."

"Never mind what you'd do—go out an' do it. This is what, Thursd'y? By Sund'y I want some noise. We been so quiet an' peaceful, anyways, since that agreement wit' the Mayor an' Goldie an' Hannibal, it's gettin' on my nerves. If it went on like this very long, I'd go out an' strangle a Chink. This is a spot. I got a reason—a damn good one."

"I shall say you have," chimed in Shapiro.

"Anyway," said Ferrone, "we'll put it over."

"That's what I call conversation," cackled Kinky King. "Have another drink?"

CHAPTER IV

The Mayor of the sovereign city, metropolis of the western world, sat in his throne room in City Hall. His feet relaxed on the big walnut desk of his high office. Across it, contemplating the ashes on his cigar, sat the Chief of Police.

"Listen here, Leo," said the Mayor, "we've got to pull a pinch in this Kinky King case."

The Chief blew on the end of his cigar until it glowed red again

"Anything you say, Highguy," assented the Chief. "Who d'you pick to take the fall?"

"I don't care. But the papers are running red this morning. After that Hannibal-King-Gorio disarmament truce, after my tall and mighty promises of no more gang war, to have this come off—they're laying me out like nobody's business. We at least have to go through the motions of kicking somebody over the jumps."

"All right. We know who settled Kinky King—Goldie Gorio!"

"What makes you so sure? Would he be fool enough to leave his gold-mounted gun behind him—he might as well have left his card."

"That's Goldie. That souvenir either means he was nowhere near the job or he did it himself. He's as likely to do the one as the other. If somebody else did it with his rod, the play was to make it look like him, which it would even if there was no direct steer that way. If he did it himself, he's shrewd and daring enough to figure that if he's copped for it we ain't strong enough to go through."

"Who says we're not? I'm the Mayor——"

"Who says you ain't? Tell me to bring in Goldie. I'll do it. And in eight hours the roof'll cave in on the both of us. You know what hook-ups he's got. You know the precin't captains, the distric' leaders, the ward committeemen that are in with him. For what? For dough. And for what do they get their dough? P'tection. Who made you? The org'nization. Who's the org'nization? The precin't captains, the ward committeemen, the distric' leaders. Okay. Run Goldie in and run them out."

The Mayor leaned a trifle farther back and slumped deeper into his big armchair.

"There's something in what you say, Leo," he agreed. "There's considerable."

"There's superconsiderable. You put me in the front office because I'm no cluck. Well?"

"But—we've got to pull a pinch. We must have a tangled ram as a sacrifice. Somebody sensational enough to be Page 1. Somebody to stall it till the story's cold—when they assassinate some other gangster. Now—who?"

"If you ask me, Highguy," hoarsely whispered the Chief, "what we need is a woman."

"A woman? For what?"

"For pictures—for human int'rest—for copy—you don't want a tangled ram, you want a tangled sheep."

"Humph—for a copper you exhibit unusual intelligence. Sounds right. Now, where do we get this female?"

"Polack Annie!"

"Who? What's her line? Who'd she ever kill?"

"Nobody that I ever know of. But she had at least two good men killed—the Edgewater Kid and Kinky King. She's a red-headed hunk o' dynamite, she pictures like a house afire, and she was King's sweetie, blew him for the Kid,

and was sprung yest'day by Goldie Gorio. Want any better dovetail than that?"

"Gee, that's hot. Is it all copesettee?"

"They found a gold lipstick tube with the gun, didn't they?"

"So I read."

"So I'm telling you. I've got it in my desk. Well, the gat was Goldie's—that's six-two-and-even. But that lipstick! Goldie ain't no—he don't make up his lips, does he? It's most likely the lipstick had nothing to do with the murder at all. Kinky had dames running in and out all hours of the day like it was a grocery store. But you can't laugh off that lipstick at that, can you?"

"H'h—n-no. It wasn't Kinky's, that's clear."

"Play that across the board. It's got a trade-mark on it, too. There's maybe a million like it in town—but it'll photograph—the papers'll hop to it—big clue business—who was the owner of the dainty lipstick?—when that is cleared up, the slayer of the West Side rum runner baron will be known? Now, how can we throw 'em a man? Do you follow me—or do you?"

"Leo, I do. This should go over like Republican prosperity propaganda."

"Bank on it, Highguy. She's the Helen o' Troy behind this whole war. If she isn't in it up to her good-looking neck, she knows the inside, just the same. About her we probably won't get a squawk from the party boys. And Goldie'll know we can never convict her, so he won't stir up too much hell. It'll intrigue the papers. They've never got a good snapshot of Annie. I'll make her stand for photos if I have to have three dicks wrastle her. She's good for two or three days. By that time somebody'll prob'ly lay out Goldie, and by the time that funeral is over, Kinky King'll be last winter's snow. Oke?"

"A sweet pea, Leo. Go to it."

"I'll have her brought in before yonder sun sets over the West Side," smiled the Chief. "When the City Hall reporters come in, tell 'em we're on a lead and promise an important arrest before evening. I'll make good for you, too. And no kickbacks."

"Grand, Leo. Let's not have any kickbacks."

"How did I get to be the Chief? I s'pose

I'm dumb. How'd I find out about the Kid and Kinky and Annie? I know somethin', Highguy. I got many a stool-pigeon in the gangs. They stick—oh, of course. They stick. But they still know there's police. And a few o' the rats want to be in right with me—just in case of—get me?"

"Uhuh. . . . Sure you can pick up this Annie?"

"Anybody could—I mean, easy. She could hide like a purple rhinoceros. I'll go out and nip her myself—in person. That will make it more important. And then I'll know it's done right. I'll phone and let you know."

"Leo—I guess I pick a mean Chief of Police!"

"Mean is right, Highguy—and when you say mean you mean mean!"

"H'lo, Annie," said the Chief.

"I—who are you?"

"Don't get hot and bothered, Annie—nobody much—just the Chief of Police."

"Oh—and what could you possibly want with me, Chief?"

"Possibly? I could possibly want to take you to the park and let you look at the lions on

the Art Museum, or could possibly want to give you a spin and let you see our marvelous boulevard system and our perfect traffic operation, or I could possibly want to spoon with you in the moonlight on the outer drive near the illuminated monument, or I could possibly want to show you where the tunnel caved in. But I possibly don't. I possibly want to reveal to you the splendid hospitality of Central Station."

"Is—is that a depot?"

"Oh, yes. But you don't leave from there for any place in partic'lar. You get a ticket, but you don't pay for it—not in advance, anyways. You go through an iron gate, but a bluecap is with you instead of a redcap. You——"

"You mean I'm under arrest?"

"Oh, not quite as harsh as all that. You're going by-by with Uncle Leo. Put on your little tin hat, Annie. Uncle's busy."

"But—what have I done? What am I charged with?"

"I don't know what you're charged with—prob'ly heroin. As for what you've done, it wasn't so bad—any nice girl might have forgot and done the same thing."

"What?"

"Oh—only murder! Where were you when Kinky took it in the belly?"

Annie staggered back on her high heels.

"I—what are you tryin' to get acrost? You're slippin' me the rap on that Kinky King killin'? Me?"

"I don't mean your cousin Sophie. C'mon—button up, your overcoat, you belong to me."

"J-just a minnit—I want to phone."

"Goldie Gorio? He'll be hepped soon enough."

"N-no. My lawyer."

"Don't be a clown. I'll grab you by the back o' your neck and the seat o' your— I can take you so far and bury you so deep that sixty-four lawyers won't dig you up in sixty-five days. But behave and you'll get a square shake. I'll book you day after t'-morrow, and then your mouthpiece can get you all the hebeases corpuses that they got printed blanks to fill out for. Right now, though, you're callin' up nobody."

Annie shot him a quick slant out of the corner of one blue eye and made a dash for the phone. The Chief wrenched it from her hands and tore the wires out of the wall with one

powerful jerk, and flung the dead instrument into a corner.

"Shake it up," he ordered. "I don' want to get rough."

"Not very rough," she panted. "I'm entitled to advice of counsel——"

"Bottle it. You're comin' with me—and you're comin' now—do you go out on your own power, or do I take you out in a basket?"

"One second—have you got a warrant?"

"Oh, what's the use?" despaired the Chief. He rushed at her, threw one arm around her neck and the other under her knees—and half a minute later Polack Annie, clawing and profaning and struggling and threatening, was dumped into the Chief's sedan; a door boomed shut, and she felt the vehicle under way.

"Now, I don't want to pop you one on the beezer, because you'll look terrible when the newspapers shoot your mug," said the Chief. "So behave yourself, Annie."

"You win, Chief," she answered. "But I'll break you for this if it's the last thing I ever do—and don't you forget it!"

"You try it—and that will be the last thing you'll ever do," he responded, reaching for a fresh cigar and a match.

CHAPTER V

Goldie sat in council with his cabinet at the North Royal Street headquarters.

The phone rang in the room back of the false-front garage. Chimp started up, Goldie palmed him back.

"I'll take it," he said. "I know what's comin' anyways."

"Hello," he sang. "Who? What? Oh . . . yeh—I know—say, you mus' be hard up for a blind fall, Chief . . . uhuh . . . okay . . . but why don't you book her? Some water on your wheel, huh? Well, if that wins you any bets, it's We'nsday in Poughkeepsie with me . . . see she gets some decent eats, will you? Keep me in touch . . . much obliged . . . no —nothin' like that—the law is the law, an' you know me when the law is the law—oh, sure. S'long."

He hung up, turned to the mob, took out his gold cigarette case, extracted a gold-tipped cigarette, withdrew his gold lighter, lit his smoke, puffed forth, and made his speech:

"Boys—Annie's pinched!"

They let go exclamations, each in his own style. Goldie, his eyes half closed, took them all in. He fussed with his gold chain. He raised his lip and flashed his gold teeth.

"Damn it," he snarled, "I got half a notion to give that big flatfoot the works. He's hot for the front-page copy. I could burn him up with it. . . . They got a grand gall, these here mayors an' coppers, puttin' the rap on her. . . . All them bulls is got their own homes, ain't they? Where'd they get 'em? Makin' arrests? I'm laughin' with you. They got 'em keepin' their pug noses clean, doin' as they're paid to do, an' not bein' patriots. So now they manhandle Annie an' toss her in the clink. It gets my Guinea up."

Chimp shook his thin shoulders.

"Goldie," he said out of the corner of his ill-shaped mouth, "you gimme the office an' I'll go down to City Hall an' tear up the hull joint. I'll knock the mayor stiff an' send for the Chief——"

"Wait a minute," interrupted Goldie. "I said half a notion. Only half o' one. The police is gettin' pretty uppity, if you ask me. Their word ain't worth a quarter no more.

There ain't no honest bulls left. You pay 'em for p'tection, an' you're no safer than some shoe clerk what don' kick in a nickel . . . but, we better go a li'l easy. This calls for some thought."

"This calls for some action," volunteered Ray. "Take it from me——"

"Pull the zipper on your pan—this is no traffic problem. An' when I crave advice from you, I'll screw down the window o' the car an' p'litely ask you. I'm blazin'. I know what I oughta do. But I'm consid'rin policy. I oughta show them civil service stooges a lesson in higher mathematics. If this was the end o' the world, I'd do it. But a lot o' you mugs is got fam'lies——"

"Aw, t'hell wit' my fam'ly," spat Chimp. "My manhood is somepin', too, ain't it—even if I am married?"

"You bet. But, jus' the same, you all sit here an' wait—I'm goin' downtown—down the line an' all the way to the top. . . . C'mon, Ray."

The driver picked himself up. Goldie filliped the remains of his cigarette into a corner. Two murderers sprang up to help him on with his camel's hair overcoat. Another handed him

his gold-headed stick. At the door he turned.

"Wait," he repeated. "You heard me."

The reporters in City Hall were agitated. And when that hard-boiled flock gets agitated, something is doing. Not alone the reporters downstairs, but the older, more advanced squad above, covering the hall and not the police detail, were going strong—their business was with the Mayor, and this business was big enough to interest His Honor, in person, in the flesh—whole lot of flesh.

The Mayor wasn't a bad sort. He was no out-and-out thief. He had wriggled up through the tortuous trails of local politics, playing with those who could do him some good. The little organizers grouped together clusters of voters who didn't care much about economics or patriotism, but who wanted protection of some kind—to peddle or to sell to the city or to bootleg or to hang out swinging signs against city ordinances—or to foster racial, religious or neighborhood interests.

A higher group organized the organizers to get standing as jobbers of votes, and above them was the next class, which concentrated the jobbers and job holders, and who wholesaled

precincts and wards through control of the balance of power in them. They chose the Mayor, and he paid off through them back down the line. Strictly United States system.

The Mayor gave the town a pretty fair administration. Civic progress kept moving. New boulevards meant work for thousands of the faithful, and inside information about coming improvements meant enriching the higher-ups through optioning adjacent corners and leases.

The gangs had to be recognized. The gangsters muscled in whether or no, and it was better and far more profitable to have them in solid outfits, where they could be dealt with through leaders, than to have the guerrillas springing up on their own everywhere all the time. That method would have meant even more lawlessness and no return at all. Gangs were big business, and, like all big business, had their vices, but in the end usually realized that certain limits had to be drawn. As long as they remained in their own reservations and made speakeasy keepers and gin makers and beer runners and gamblers and slaves kick in and stay put, they were rather a help than a problem.

Seldom were they brought to book. But this time an even higher power, the newspapers, had forced the condition. It seemed like another scandalous and slaughterous inter-gang war, which would make the town notorious around the world again. Therefore the present to-do.

Polack Annie had been brought in. The Chief of Police, himself, had called for her. When he moved, the Mayor had spoken. At the first inkling of so picturesque a pinch the boys had called their city editors, and photographers were swarming about the big graft-and-granite structure in the soul of the city. No sheet had yet shot a snap of Polack Annie. This was a moment.

They were coagulated in the anteroom of the Chief's office, looking for the millionth time at the framed photographs of past heads of the department, most of them in their graves where they could ignore what was said about them. The secretary had told them it wouldn't be long now. Annie was to be brought up the back elevator—a distinction given to but few.

A buzzer rasped. The secretary beckoned, and the men who meet so many interesting people flocked in to meet another one. The

Chief, a big cigar cocked upward between his teeth, sat grinning behind his desk. The Mayor squatted a few feet away. Between them, composed and nonchalant, relaxed Polack Annie.

The photographers set their tripods, aimed their boxes and bustled with their flashlight powder.

"We're set now—ready?" called Messenheim, dean of the camermen.

"Let 'er go," cried His Honor, and a dozen puffs and a dozen flames belched from as many pans held high.

"Can we have her alone—standing up?" asked Messenheim.

"Sure . . . stand up, Annie," the genial Chief consented. She made no protest, but stood against the wall. Again the battery fired. There was a clicking shut of metal cases and dismantling of apparatus, and the picture gang scooted.

"Fellows," the Mayor opened up, "we can't disclose the evidence in this case . . . we can't even admit that this arrest is in connection with the killing of Kinky King . . . the prisoner is not on the blotter; she is being held for investigation . . . if you care to ask her

any questions, go ahead; but by virtue of the authority in me vested, I must warn the prisoner that anything she says may be used against her."

They shot questions at her . . . where was she born? . . . how old was she? . . . what did she know about the King shooting? . . . or the Edgewater Kid's knock-off? . . . or Goldie Gorio or—what?

Annie told them exactly nothing. If they wanted any information they could see her lawyer—Meyer Krantzstein—and that was more than she could. She didn't know what she was arrested for; she knew none of the persons mentioned; supposed she had been nailed in the flat where the Edgewater Kid had lived? Lots of people had lived there before him and lots would after him—no connection at all, just a dumb coincidence. That would be all. The Chief was helpless. He couldn't make her open up if she didn't want to. He nodded to a plainclothes man, who took her by the elbow and led her back to the elevator.

"Well, we produced, didn't we?" exulted the Chief.

CHAPTER VI

The gilt caparisoned limousine of Goldie Gorio slid to the curb in front of City Hall. Goldie did not move but lit up a cigarette, while his meticulously uniformed chauffeur hopped out and opened the door. With all the dignity of a maharaja the intrepid gang leader stepped from the car and strode into the municipal habitat of management and authority.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon. The lobby of the great granite structure was crowded with aldermen, precinct handlickers, ward committeemen, district captains, sightseers, bond bailsmen, widows with little children, pompous gentlemen who moved with great importance and with nothing in their pockets —that strange potpourri of heels and heelers who live as the camp followers of the successful politician, and the citizenry trying to get things done or undone.

Goldie's entrance in the foyer was not without notice. He was a spectacular figure, with a smiling front that gleamed as a show window

to one of the most fearless, cruel, vicious and lovable gangsters in all the city's underworld. He nodded benignly to several political peanuts, stopped to pat a little brat's cheek where tears had made thin streaks through the grime, pressed a coin into the hand of a cripple, and made his way to the elevator where he addressed the operator by his first name.

"Second floor, Joe—the Chief's office. By the way, how's the sick wife, feller?"

Joe fairly quivered at these solicitations from such a man as Goldie. He slammed the grill gates and had gone to the third floor before he knew it—mumbling some reply, but Goldie was not listening. He was passing the time of day with a ward committeeman—fat and fatuous.

The elevator came down to a stop. The door slid open and Goldie stepped out. The sergeant at the information desk arose when he approached.

"The Chief busy, Mike?" Goldie asked.

"Not for you," smiled the sergeant, as he walked quickly into the Chief's office. He returned in an instant and, holding the door open, waved Goldie in.

"Hello, Chief," greeted Goldie, taking a seat without being invited. The Chief's face wore

an expression of bewilderment and trepidation.

"Hello, Goldie—what's on your mind?" he asked, nervously fingering some paper on his desk.

"Oh, nothing, Chief," said Goldie, breezily. Another cigarette, and he carefully adjusted his cane and leaned back in his chair, looking at the Chief with half-closed, smiling eyes. "I just thought I'd drop in on you and do a little buzzing. I like to call on my friends. They say a guy what neglects his friends is chasin' with his enemies. Everything's fine by me—an' by you?"

Goldie raised a quizzical eyebrow. The Chief fidgeted nervously in his chair.

"Well, everything's okay up my alley, Goldie," he said, finally.

"Yeah?"

"Yes."

"Ain't nothin' botherin' your—conscience?"

"Not a thing, Goldie," but the Chief's gaze did not meet that of the gangster general. Instead, he jumped from his chair and began to march the floor.

He halted in front of Goldie, who sat as calm as ever, puffing at his cigarette.

"Come on, Goldie—what's the gag? You got a squawk—what is it?"

"Why, you surprise me, Chief," amiably rejoined Goldie. "I just come up for a nice little chat. I thought maybe you'd be glad to see me. Me and you's been good friends all along—right?"

"Sure, Goldie."

"Well, then, what makes you feel that I have any particular urgent or unpleasant business when I come to see you?"

The Chief took his seat. His telephone buzzed. He glanced at Goldie, a quick, anxious glance, and picked up the receiver.

"Yes—yes—I see. Her attorney? Well, nothing doing—absolutely no!"

The Chief slammed the receiver back on its hook and fumbled in his pocket for a cigar.

"Cigarette?" asked Goldie.

"No, thanks," refused the Chief, as he reached for a cigar.

Goldie's eyes narrowed, but he continued to smile.

"That reminds me," he began in a slow, even voice. "You've shanghaied a certain little red-headed moll, who's done nothin'. Nothin' at

all. She ain't got this dirty rap you slapped on her comin'." He paused. "You oughta go out and get the right guys—the wrong guys—the ones, Chief, what done that job. You know as well as I do that a frail little jane like her ain't cut out for the clippin' racket. Why, she wouldn' have the heart to hurt a mouse."

The Chief's face went bloodless. His hands worked quick and fast along the arms of his chair.

"Goldie," he began, "if you mean Polack Annie, you're weird. We got the goods on her. I hate to have to pinch a woman for murder, but it couldn't be helped. We found her lipstick in Kinky King's apartment."

"Say, Big Boy," said Goldie in the same even tone, "that Kinky King guy had a hundred twists in his twisted joint. How do you know but what that lipstick belonged to one o' them? And why would Polack Annie want to get him? There's plenty o' guys she could have had for the job. She knew it. She wouldn't have to smear them pretty little mitts o' her'n with no blood of a bedbug like Kinky King."

"You know they found a gold automatic in the room, too," said the Chief, significantly.

"My God, you'd think they was Tong killers

the way they leave them tools behind," chuckled Goldie, tapping a fresh cigarette on the Chief's desk. "Sounds like one of them stage shows where the detectives is always finding something the op'rator left behind. In my experience no good killer leaves no tip-offs. Of course, somethin' might be planted."

Goldie looked steadily at the Chief. But the Chief met his gaze unflinchingly.

"Nothing was planted, Goldie," he said.

Goldie's face hardened now. His look was steel. His smile was brazen. His voice rang quick and sharp like blows upon an anvil.

"Look here, Chief," he began. "Let's you and me get right down to turkey. You think you're hidin' behind a blanket but you're behind a lace curtain to me. I see all 'at's goin' on in that noodle o' yourn. You're out to feed them fly newspaper boys with live stuff till this blows over. You want to give 'em pictures of a hot number an' a little sensation. But there ain't no use fall-guyin' a girl like Polack Annie who's sufferin' enough since the Edgewater Kid was popped off."

"You got me all wrong, Goldie," said the Chief, arising once more and beginning to pace up and down his appropriation carpet.

"I got you right!" Goldie's voice was clicking now. "I'll tell you, Chief, I want Annie sprung, and sprung quick. If it was a case o' right I'd string with you. But it's a case o' wrong. Let her out o' this."

"Goldie," and the Chief paused in his walk. "I can't do a thing—this time you're asking too much."

He pushed his hand downward, spreading out the fingers and shrugging with an air of finality. Goldie's attitude changed. He smiled—a wicked smile. With a leisurely movement he arose, flicked a speck from his immaculate coat sleeve, closed his long, strong, artistic finger about the head of his cane, and gave a little down tug to his hat brim.

"Oke, Chief," he grinned. He turned and walked to the door. Then he wheeled. "Listen. If you think you're runnin' this town you're crazy. There's a few others who have somethin' to say—see?" He chuckled. "If your crack is a challenge, Chief, I say—oke! S'long."

Goldie blew a kiss to the Chief, smiled and walked out of the office. The Chief started to brace himself up in the chair arms; then sank limply back again.

CHAPTER VII

It was eight-thirty at night in the Big Burg. The Rialto was ablaze . . . the trite, monotonous pleasures of Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen were beginning . . . theater-goers settled back in a stuffy, perfumed atmosphere to learn things about life which they already knew . . . jabbering, be-jeweled matrons played bridge and talked of everything else . . . the Mayor was taking a nap . . . lovers whispered platitudes in each other's ears and thrilled at innocuous lies . . . coatless, collarless men sank into chairs after a hard day's work for a harder night at poker . . . Polack Annie still sat and chafed in a cell . . . policemen stepped brickly from speakeasy doors and then sauntered with leisurely innocence down the street . . . linotype machines in newspaper plants were clicking and clacking . . . a sprinkling of lights intagliated the sides of tall buildings—lights from the offices of boob husbands who actually worked and did not cheat on their cheating wives . . .

Fast-moving, silent cars streaked through the city's streets. Sleek, luxurious cars filled with hard-faced, murderous men. The entire Goldie Gorio gang was abroad—out with full panoply of sawed-off shotguns, gats, typewriters, pineapples and stench bombs.

At the switchboard in the Central Police Station, the operator who had come on at the eight o'clock trick plugged in now and then beneath a winking little light.

"Slattery and Doherty reporting—Slattery speaking," came from the police call box on the East Side.

"Well, what's doin'?" lazily asked the operator, fingering some police slips before him.

"Nuttin' doin'," from the cop.

"Now listen," spoke the operator, smoothing out one of the slips, "the Lieut. wants you to go to two-three-two-five Elman Avenue and get a better description of that Ryan girl what's missin'. Find out if she's got crooked teeth or fallen arches or a mole under her left shoulder blade. This here description you guys sent in would fit any moll—'blue eyes, regular features, brown hair, five feet five, wore black stockings, black pumps, turban hat, short, black dress'—

what the hell! Maybe she's got a scar somewhere, or wears a hunk o' jewelry—go to it—get busy."

"Okay," cheerfully rejoined Slattery.

The little light snapped out. The operator yanked out the jack and turned his detective magazine.

"Believe me, the guys in these stories are some dicks," he muttered.

At exactly eight-forty-five the switchboard lit up like a Times Square electric sign with the vertigo. The operator tossed away his magazine just at the point where the detective had rounded up the ten desperate gangsters, and began frantically to plug in.

"The Lafayette Avenue power house has been stuck up. . . . The main generator and the auxiliary generator are jammed. . . . There ain't no lights in the midtown section. . . ."

All the coppers in the heart of town were pulling their boxes.

The operator frantically signaled the Chief's home over the police wires.

At least three of the main streets had been suddenly thrown into darkness. Here were most of the theaters and movie houses. For a

time after the theaters went dark the patrons remained in their seats, believing that the inconvenience was only temporary. Everyone took the situation jovially—ignorant of the sinister motive behind it. The actors were forced to abandon their lines. The movie screens went black.

The only lights on the streets were those of automobile lamps which punched holes like funnels into the night. The rays of the cold, silvery half moon disseminated weakly into the darkened cañons. The word came that it would be several hours before a hook-up could be effected to provide light. Theater managers announced to their audiences that performances would be suspended. The playhouses belched forth into the darkened streets their crowds.

Meantime the Chief of Police had taken charge of the situation. The reserves were called out and thrown into the benighted streets. It was feared that the darkness would cloak robbers and ravishers.

Hardly had the Chief arrived at his office than news was received that bricks had been hurled through the plate glass show windows of four large department stores on the main stem.

"Goldie Gorio!" the Chief said over the telephone to the Mayor. "He'll paralyze the town."

"Send the Homicide Detail to his headquarters—to his house—anywhere—pick him up," ordered His Honor.

"But—what——"

"Never mind what," snapped the Mayor, "this makes a monkey out of you and me. We can't let hoodlums run this town as openly as this. I'll take full responsibility for everything you do. Bring him in. I'll be down in twenty minutes."

The Chief had hardly hung up the receiver than a call came through for him.

"Hello, Chief," came the cheery voice of Goldie. "I just wanted to know how you felt——"

The connection was severed. The Chief ordered the operator to trace the call. It had come from a booth in a cigar store on North Brigham Street, the operator reported. The Chief sank back in his chair helplessly. He sighed and lighted a cigar. Then he laid it down on the edge of his desk and forgot all about it.

In the midtown section the police were having

their griefs with traffic. All intersections were in a snarl. Cars were jammed in a hopeless tangle A thousand automobile horns were growling out their protests. Nothing could move. Police whistles split the air and no one knew what they meant.

Sam Mandelbaum, owner of one department store where the show window had been smashed, was located by his watchman at a full-dress affair in the Dresden Hotel, uptown. He had an unsatisfatory conversation with the Chief of Police, so he ordered his car and chauffeur. After several hours he had rounded up six men —men of influence in the city—bankers, merchants, attorneys. They held a midnight consultation.

In the new headquarters of the Gorie gang—location unknown to the police—Goldie, immaculate, calm, was sitting before a telephone. He had just ordered four men to plant five sticks of dynamite on Chelsea Highway, one of the main arteries into the city—the road over which the milk trucks rattled in in the morning.

"Be sure the road is clear," he ordered. "I don't want nobody hurt—see?"

"Okay, boss."

Goldie sat back and chuckled. He lighted a cigarette and inhaled with deep satisfaction.

"We'll have that high bull on his knees tomorrow," he chortled. "I'll run this town or I'll ruin it."

Ray, the chauffeur, who was acting as lookout, came in.

"Chimp is here," he announced.

"Let him in," ordered Goldie.

Chimp, the wiry, simian-faced little fellow, with smirking countenance, sauntered in.

"Well?" queried Goldie, without looking up.

"I couldn't make it," Chimp said in a matter-of-fact way.

"I don't take that kind o' talk, Chimp." Goldie's voice was hard.

"That water works station was surrounded by bulls—anyway, you give me the toughest job, blowing up that plant," whined Chimp. "I'm the patsy for the mob——"

Goldie jumped up.

"You—you——"

"Now listen, Chief, don't get too raw—remember the Edgewater——"

Goldie's hand flew to his pocket. Something bright sailed in the air. The next instant

Chimp was clutching his nose. He bent over in pain. A twenty-dollar gold piece clanked to the floor and rolled back near to Goldie's feet. He spurned it.

Chimp groaned and sank into a chair. His nose was broken!

Goldie stalked out of the room.

CHAPTER VIII

TEN o'clock next morning. The Mayor of the Big Burg sat at his desk. There were purple circles beneath his eyes. His beefy cheeks were flushed. He was nervous and anxious. Before him lay a morning paper, and on the floor lay others. The city's shame shrieked from the headlines. The gangsters, tolerated too long as they worked vengeance and blackmail among their own kind and other lawbreakers, had jumped the fences and crippled public works, destroyed private property, endangered life and put half the town out of commission.

Acrimonious editorials demanded State intervention. If the despotism of gang rule had grown so invincible that the Chief Executive and his empowered forces could not cope with such a preposterous condition as had manifested itself last night, then it was high time for broader powers to take hold. One paper suggested that the citizens arm and protect their safety and their community honor.

"Leo," began the Mayor, "a sweet mess has been wished on us."

The Chief of Police grunted.

"There's only one thing we can do," he sighed.

"Yes? And——"

"Spring Polack Annie . . . oh, not this minute—but give our word that she will walk through the doors in a day or two. No tellin' where Goldie'll stop if we don't. I'm sure I can call him off."

"Getting chicken livered, eh? The whole thing was your idea in the first place, and now——"

"Placin' the blame'll get us nowhere. If it was a boner, let's pick the bones out of it. I ain't gettin' yellow—but let's be practical. They can turn the town upside down before we can stop 'em—if we can at all."

The Mayor turned to his desk. He thumped it, glared at the newspapers, shuddered, gathered them into a bulky lump and rammed them into his wastebasket.

"We can't do a thing now," he groaned. "Any minute a committee of civic leaders is coming to call on me—with the reporters. If I let this girl out, after the way I grand-standed

her arrest, I'd be laughed out of the city limits. I'm at the mercy of those yeggs on one hand and these volunteers on the other. I have to stall. After I get my breath, we'll try something. Right now——"

The Mayor's secretary poked his head in and nodded.

"They're here," said His Honor, with a helpless shrug. "Better stick, but say nothing unless I ask you to, and then chime in with me. Don't mention Annie. We deny that she had anything to do with this at all, see? . . . All right, Chester, bring the coroner's jury in."

They solemnly filed into the Mayor's office —eight of them. Three men of affluence, four men of influence, and one woman of prominence. She was Mrs. Guernsey Taylor, whose husband was a power on 'Change. She headed the Women's Civic League. She represented the women at large—or thought she did.

Close behind her was the Rev. Chesley Nottingham, pastor of an exclusive silk-stocking church. He was a crusader and critic whose sermons were widely reported because he "had something to say"—didn't preach about the Bible, but laid into vice and contempt of the Constitution—one amendment of it, anyway.

John Fox Wagner, banker, tanned by the Florida sun and flushed with excessive living, looked stern. He had engineered the biggest and rawest bank merger of the city after having surreptitiously bought up control of most of the small banks. Next was Charles V. Hillers, editor of the daily with the richest class of readers and the poorest number of buyers. A thin, dapper little fellow with a booming voice, he was for vested interest, peace, prosperity and the Republican party.

Sam Mandelbaum, proprietor of the busiest department store, headed the committee. He had given thousands to educate the poor children in music and literature. In his basement slaved and sweated their sisters and their mothers at minimum wages for maximum hours. A strange mixture of aggressive charity and uncharitable aggression was Sam. To him a dollar had six pennies pasted on it—the interest. What he did with it after he got it, was another matter. He gave it away, yes, but he demanded that he get it first. He donated a million to beautify playgrounds, then battled through three courts against his tax assessments.

J. Hutchins Johnstone, attorney for large

corporations, strode in as though to address a hostile jury—suave, sure, smooth. Howard Payne Rynyon, Professor of economics at the U., and Dr. Olaf Norstrom, noted surgeon, completed the body. And around them all were the newspapermen.

The Mayor rose when they entered. He had fortified himself with two shots of Scotch and a resolution—he would agree with everything and admit nothing.

"Mr. Mayor," opened up Sam Mandelbaum, "you undoubtedly anticipate the purpose of this visit. We have not come with any requests. We feel it is time to make demands. Last night's outrages——"

"The women of this city, for whom I speak —" cut in Mrs Taylor. Mandelbaum frowned.

"Mr. Mayor," he continued, "we are all paying exorbitant taxes to maintain a municipal government and a competent police force. Now we must conclude that the police are either utterly inefficient or are suborned by the criminal elements. We have no further confidence in the department. We, therefore, have drawn a resolution calling on you to ask the Governor for militia to take over the city government and give us protection, if not drive out

these desperadoes or bring them to justice."

"Gentlemen, and you, madam," with a bow to Mrs. Taylor, "the occurrences of last night were unforeseen and unprecedented. Had we any warning of such possibilities, we would have been prepared and would have handled the situation satisfactorily. We are not in connivance with the underworld, and so we were not apprised of any such a plot. Just what the gesture signified—except a protest against the severity with which we have been fighting every known lawbreaker—we have not yet determined.

"However, my intelligence squad is at work and I will have the full report shortly. The moment I have the facts I shall take action. To call out troops now would only disgrace the city far more. I must be permitted to answer this surprise attack. My Chief of Police assures me we will have everything in hand, cover against any further chance of such crimes within the day. Am I right?"

The Chief nodded.

"In twenty-four hours," the Mayor added, "we will not only have everything safe and quiet, but probably have behind bars the principal perpetrators of these deeds which we

could not humanly foresee. I ask you to withhold your resolution for that length of time."

Mandelbaum called the committee into an anteroom. The Chief tiptoed to the door. He motioned the Mayor with nods. His Honor, out of wind and very weary, smiled faintly. The Chief jumped and ran to his post. Mandelbaum, alone, returned.

"Very well," he answered, "twenty-four hours. We don't want to take snap judgment."

"Thanks," acknowledged the Mayor. "We will neither rest nor sleep."

Mandelbaum made his exit.

"Now what?" asked the Chief.

The Mayor walked to the window and looked out. He lit a cigar, returned, threw in an oversized drink.

"I'm damned if I know," he said.

In Goldie Gorio's headquarters, too, there was activity.

Business was as usual, almost, despite the desperate enterprises of the past night. Collections were coming in from the late count-ups of crap games, beer distributors, houses of hilarity, speakeasies and even more orderly

businesses into which the Gorio mob had declared itself partner by rule of the rod and acid of the pineapple.

But routine commerce lacked the punch today. No one knew what was in the back of Goldie's head, but they all understood him well enough to know he hadn't thrown that spectacular barrage just to see the fireworks; he must have some big offensive to follow up with.

The incarceration of Polack Annie, without notice to Goldie, her being held unbooked like some sucker without drag, his departure from City Hall blue with rage—such things portended a show-down or Gorio had changed his nature.

There was no profit in terrorizing and shocking and sacking the city. But there must be a policy at stake. If the town thought it was bigger than Goldie Gorio, the town must be taught how to take a joke. Polack Annie didn't quite seem important enough to the boys to do a Helen of Troy, but she would do as a symbol. Gang rule was at stake. Hadn't some obscure prince or somebody been knocked off in some unpronounceable European kingdomlet, and set the whole world on fire? Sure. It wasn't the individual—it was the principle!

CHAPTER IX

Polack Annie could not forget her man. The long hours in the detention cell made her grief no more bitter, but gave her more time to think. With the blood of her breed, the heritage of generations that had been knouted and herded and ravished and robbed, she was more orientated to feeling than to thinking. But here she was, where she had to think or sleep, and she couldn't sleep.

She was thrown in with other women, in near-by trans-sounding cells, who made the days raucous and the nights hideous. Hopheads, street walkers, thieves' consorts, a hysterical chambermaid who had strangled her illegitimate baby, a mulatto wench who had badgered a State Senator, the female product of the dregs and the drugs and the yeggs and the thugs of a metropolis.

Anna Daley, the lockup matron, was as sympathetic as might be asked for. A husky, not unhandsome woman, she could be kind and she could be brutal. Her blacksmith arms could

enfold or could knock cold. She was a civil service employee, but she knew her politics. Four of her six brothers were coppers, and the other two worked in City Hall. Goldie Gorio was to her a big shot. And Polack Annie was her star boarder.

"There, there, child," she said consolingly as she brought her good-looking red-haired inmate her supper, sent for from the outside and paid for from the outside, "it ain' goin' to get you nowheres, cryin' them pretty eyes out. They never convict women for murder; cert'nly not women with your looks, an' least of all, with the inflooence you got—so——"

"Oh, it ain't that," sobbed Annie. "The rap is boloney. It's the Kid I'm cryin' over. I fell for him after I thought I never could fall for a man that way. An' they got him after I got to love him, an' they got him becus I loved him."

The matron slid her brawny arm around the slender girl.

"Well, you'll meet him above, in a happier place," she breathed. "Pray an' have faith."

"They didn' even give him a chance to confess—to have a priest," wept Annie. "They gave him the works from acrost the street—

an' on a Sund'y. All on account o' me. An' he was even goin' to marry me, he was that sweet an' square. But we never could let go of each other long enough when we were together for that."

The matron patted her.

"It was the only happiness I ever had. Them few months was heaven. Ever since I was born—for no reason I could ever figger out—I never had no life like other girls. My ol' man was killed blowin' a safe. My ol' lady stole to feed me. She was a terrible stew an' half the time she was in the hoosegow an' me an' my three sisters an' one brother panhandled or starved. I grew up on the streets an' in the alleys. Boys an' men was makin' a play for me ever since I can remember, even when I was in rompers. There's somethin' about red hair, matron, that makes men go cookoo.

"Well, bein' exposed the way I was, I don' know why I didn't give in sooner. They say my ol' lady come of a pretty good fam'ly, an' maybe I had a streak from her. She come from Polish dukes or somethin', but she run away with my father, who brought her over here. I was born in Cleaver Street, an' born honest, at that—they was married two weeks

then. When I was eight I was runnin' the pail for beer, an' fightin' bums an' bartenders to get out again.

"When I was thirteen, ma got a stretch as a habitual. The kids was thrun in an orphan asylum, but I hid out. I hiked to Milwaukee, where I had an uncle. I thought he'd give me p'tection. He did—great. When I crawled out o' his house one mornin' at four, after I'd brained him with a chair as soon as I come to an' found enough stren'th again, I 'knew life' if you know what I mean."

"I—I know what you mean, honey . . . that's sad; that's turrible."

"Well, I didn' have much at no time, an' now I didn' even have nothin' to save. I met a Great Lakes grain-boat captain, an' he gimme a place to sleep an' somethin' to eat, an' at least he was good to me. I sailed the lakes for almost a year, an' then he got drunk an' got jealous o' some stevedore whose name I didn' even know, an' he left me flat in Buff'lo.

"I hitch-hiked my way back, okay excep' in Sandusky, Ohio, where they vagged me an' chucked me in the hands of the Children's S'ciety. An', say, that outfit is tougher than a den o' lions. They preached at me, lit into

me, fed me tracts an' sour beans, an' got me decent work on a farm. Oh, it was plenty decent. The farmer, an' the hired man an' the farmer's son—an' even the village preacher—they all took a special interest in me. I took it on the lam. Back to Cleaver Street for me. If I have to go crooked, I at least wanna be where there's movies an' there's things to wake you out o' your sleep excep' crickets an' yokels.

"By the time I got back, my brother, Pete, had been sprung out o' the orphanage an' was livin' with a penny-ante labor slugger who was ambitious to get into the beer racket. He set one eye on me, an' twenty minutes later I went out through a window an' didn' even stop to open it. He tailed me all over the town an' told me if I didn' listen to reason he'd croak my brother. Well, that lasted till he joined Kinky King's gang. To show he was a big-timer, he flashed me in front o' Kinky.

"Kinky had a grand eye for that kind o' flashes. He took my gen'leman friend with his hand aroun' his Adam's apple, an' says, 'What's a bujok punk like you doin' with a redhead like that?' My lousy sweetheart says, 'Boss, that's my woman.' Kinky looks at him,

then spits, then laughs, then growls. 'She is like hell,' he says. 'In this gang everything belongs to me . . . go on out an' walk down to City Hall . . . keep your eye on it . . . if City Hall caves in, I have to know it right away . . . you watch an' phone me if it does . . . an' don' come back till I give you orders.'

"He ain' got his orders yet.

"I went livin' in Kinky's house. When he was good to me, he was so good it turned my stomach. When he got sore he walloped me pretty. He had me black an' blue most o' the time. He was so jealous o' me, he'd beat me an' beg me an' swear at me an' kiss my shoes. He'd lock me in an' put guards on the doors, front an' back, when he had to leave me home. He dressed me up like the inside o' Goldie's car, an' he loved to take me around—where his mob an' the other gorillas could see me. So, one night, he took me to the Devil's Hall."

Polack Annie stopped. She closed her eyes, raised her shapely chin, clasped her hands between her knees, and sat with a sublimated smile of recollection and reflamed emotion.

Then in a moment she continued:

"That night—I—I met him—the Kid!

"He was only a kid. He had a fresh pan on

him, an' a wicked eye. He was on the make, though he didn' have to be—every broad what ever saw him did a flop for him. But he didn' play the field. He was throwin' 'em over his shoulder. His eyes an' my eyes met—an' clicked. Lady, you could o' heard that click roun' the world. Kinky was potted, but he sat up with a jerk an' he slobbers at me an' wants to know what the hell. There was plenty o' hell. But Kinky, who'd been jealous o' the iceman an' the letter carrier an' his own mob, not a one of 'em with guts enough to look cock-eyed at me as tough as they was, muffed the angle.

"I made him take me to the Hall almos' ev'ry night after that. The Kid never missed once. At last I got Kinky so plastered that he passed out. I officed the Kid. We didn' say much—we didn' need to. He put me in his car an' he took me to his flat.

"Nobody saw us leave—much. You know how the stools an' lice crawl to a noise like Kinky King. By the time the fiftieth heel was givin' him the low-down he wasn' only burnin' up becus I run out on him—Kinky King—an' becus I tossed him for one o' Goldie's gang—him, Kinky King—but becus I let a flock o'

crums in on it so they could tip him off—him, Kinky King.

"I knew what it meant. The Kid tried to make me think it was all oke. I knew better. But I was hooked an' so was he, an' in our hearts we knew we'd better do our lovin' while we had time. Goldie didn' say a lot, but he had the angle right, o' course. He'd jus' made some chump agreement that his mob an' Kinky's wouldn' rod nor rat so long as the boys stayed on the reservations. But they hadn' made no deal about the girls. That was a new twist—an' I was that twist.

"Ev'ry minute my Kid was with me was velvet. I cried myself blind whenever he left my sight. I shuddered at ev'ry noise. I counted the ticks o' the clock. My heart beat the seconds an' ev'ry beat was a jolt. Goldie was swell about it. He said Kinky didn't have the gizzard to croak one o' his boys. I knew better. That swill what Kinky used 'd make a rabbit fight a tiger, an' Kinky was no rabbit.

"Sat'd'y night was our night in, mostly, the Kid an' me. This p'tic'lar Sat'd'y night was —well, it was what the end o' the world oughta be. An' it was all o' that . . . he lef' me Sund'y mornin' to go to mass. He had to see

Goldie after that. He said he'd be home for supper. I had the beer on the ice—the cold ham trimmed up with letture leaves an' the p'tato's boilin', watchin' over 'em to get 'em jus' the way he loved 'em . . . I was smilin'—he learned me how to worry an' smile at the same time an' then——

"Well, you read the papers!

"So you wanna tell me not to cry.

"I got a right to cry—I earned it—all the chiefs in the world couldn' squeeze a tear out o' me. I ain' cryin' becus I'm rapped, or becus I'm scared or becus I'm here. What the hell do I care where I am? What the hell do I care what they do to me? They can't bring back my Kid, so he won't come home an' miss me. An' if he ain't there what do I care where I am? But I can cry. An' if I wanna cry, don't you stop me. Get me?"

"Sure," said the matron. "I'll cry with you, honey."

And she did.

CHAPTER X

CENTRAL POLICE DETAIL, headquarters for important prisoners and those detained for "front office" questioning, was located in a three-story squat red brick building two blocks from City Hall. The city had long been promised a modern up-to-date police building. But year after year the plans were pigeonholed while aggressive politicians won praise for themselves by diverting the building funds to schools, parks, bridges, and boulevards. These things impressed the public far more. The cops could wait. Who thinks about cops, anyway, on election day?"

Here were the "blind" cells—the men in a dark, foul-smelling basement, the women on the first floor. Day and night the patrol wagons drew up the narrow little alley and the prisoners were hustled out and thrown into the antiquated cages, where they were held without booking—sometimes for weeks.

The Chief of Detectives had his office on the second floor. The Captain of the First Pre-

cinct was on the first floor, just off the street. The line-up room was in the basement and every morning at ten o'clock the prisoners were marched out one by one, placed under a bright light, while masked detectives stood about in groups and scrutinized them. There was a small back room which was known to every crook in the city. The "goldfish bowl." It was devoid of furniture, save one chair. In a corner lay an ordinary rubber hose. Sometimes prisoners were entertained here—with little formality. Here detectives vented their sadistic wrath against helpless men, flagellating them with the rubber hose and pummeling them with their beefy fists. This was known as "seeing the goldfish," a facetious way of characterizing the American inquisition.

There was not a gangster in the Big Burg who did not know the layout of Central Detail. Most of them, whether they had been guilty of any crime or not, had been hustled down there at different times to taste the grim hospitality of the coppers and dicks, "on suspicion."

Polack Annie was still bawling her eyes out at a few minutes to midnight, and Police Headquarters had sunk back into its nocturnal tran-

quility when Goldie Gorio gave his final instructions to his two dozen hoodlums in the converted stable where he had set up his new concentration camp.

"I don't want no useless shootin'," he ordered. "I don't want coppers' blood on our hands. Of course you never can tell what's goin' to happen. But the way I got this thing doped we'll have Annie out o' there before them flatfeet get their breath."

He looked around at the hard, tense faces before him.

"I'm goin' to spring her myself——"

"But, Chief, there ain' no use you takin' no chances," whined Chip Hummel.

"You heard me," snapped Goldie. Then he continued:

"Now, Moon-Face," he turned to a slender fellow whose countenance was dished out like a crescent. "You know how to jim up that signal system. You used to be with the telephone company, so don' make no mistakes."

"Oke, boss," answered Moon-Face, grinning and drawing his linesman's tools from his pocket. "It's jimmed."

"Now, you six," indicated Goldie, laying out a penciled chart on the table before him, "I

want you on the corner to the south. Nobody gets through—see? Have your car pointin' north with the engine goin'."

"Right!" chorused Clammy Withers, assigned to lieutenant the half dozen.

"And, you guys," he turned to another group. "I want you to do the same at this north intersection. Keep that street clear, because we're goin' out that way like nobody's business."

"Okay!"

"And you eight guys—I want you to walk right in the front door. There won't be more than three or four cops in there. Stick up the desk sergeant—you two cover the captain's office—and you jam that door that leads to the dicks' room."

The eight nodded.

"Now, Ray," he said, turning to his chauffeur, "you come with me. And you, Cranky. Got that sledge hammer? Yeah? Okay. One sock's got to bust that door. It's old and the lock's weak and it swings in. Ray, back that car just into the alley and have it turnin' north. I want this thing to come off at exactly twelve-thirty. When you hear the siren on my car—beat it. You six straight north—you eight

turn at Eighth Street an' into the park. I'll go left a block west, but you guys keep goin'. Meet me at Silver Lake. Keep goin' till nobody's followin' you. Shoot it out if you can't shake 'em. Try speed first and lead last."

He paused and motioned to Ray, who went to a box and dragged out six bottles of rye.

"Come on—take a good stiff jolt—but no more after that."

Goldie turned away as the men passed the bottles around. Goldie did not drink liquor. He never did.

He had worked his desperate plan out in every detail, one of the most daring, unheard-of raids in the history of local crime.

True, three desperate men—the notorious Car Barn bandits—prepared in Chicago one day to stick up the outlying Sheffield Avenue police station the next night and spring their pal, Gus Marx. But they never carried through their plans because Marx confessed before they came, peaching on all of them into the bargain. That was as near as any purpose had ever come to the wild raid of the gold-lined gangster.

"All set?" asked Goldie as the empty bottles, one by one, were tossed aside. A series of

affirmative grunts answered him. It was twelve o'clock.

"Now, take your time about gettin' out of here," warned Goldie. "Pick up your cars wherever you got them stanched. We start work at twelve-thirty sharp. Everybody in his place and on his job. Let's go!"

With Ray and the giant Cranky, Goldie walked out of the room. The others left in twos and threes.

"Ray, are you sure all them license plates was well dusted?" Goldie asked as he got into his car.

"Every one—I looked 'em over, boss," assured the chauffeur.

Goldie settled back in his "business" car, a gray sedan. Cranky got in beside Ray, nursing his huge sledge hammer between his knees. Goldie looked at his wrist watch.

"Take a turn around the drive for a little air, Ray," he ordered. The chauffeur nodded. The clutch slid in gently and the car got away like a panther. Goldie lit up and crossed his legs.

Goldie calmly puffed his cigarette, methodically removing it and returning it to his lips with a nerveless hand. He might have been

on his way to visit distant cousins, so indifferent was his attitude.

The car moved along swiftly and noiselessly over the velvet boulevards. Goldie's watch ticked away the minutes, and now and then as they passed an arc light, he raised his arm and looked at it.

Finally he lifted the speaker at his side and called to Ray:

"Okay, Ray—turn her downtown."

With both hands he patted the two automatics which he had strapped under his armpits. An inscrutable smile rose over his face. Then his lips closed tight and grim. He uncrossed his legs and leaned a bit forward in his seat as the car sped toward Central Detail —and Polack Annie.

CHAPTER XI

The police matron had just locked the outer barred door behind Crip, an insignificant-looking little negro with a clubfoot. At night he ran sandwiches and coffee for the prisoners. And night and day he was a stool for the police. The narcotic squad palmed him a ration of confiscated dope at intervals, and the chief of detectives was covering him up for the murder of a black back-room girl that had never been "solved."

Crip had a whining voice, a shrewd eye and an uncanny sense of hearing. Tucked away in his thick-skulled bean was more information than equipped a police chief's secretary. He dressed in a ragged suit, and wore a greasy old cap down over his eyes. People took pity on him and ofttimes gave him coins without solicitation.

"Take that black coffee to Polack Annie," ordered the matron. She turned back to her desk when a terrific blow on the steel door burst it open. The next instant, standing be-

fore her was Goldie Gorio—a brilliant, gold-mounted automatic in each hand. Goldie was smiling pleasantly.

"Good evening, Anna," he greeted.

"Good evenin', Goldie," faltered Anna Daley.

"Get Polack Annie out here and get her quick," spat Goldie through his gold teeth. Then he smiled again.

Polack Annie, whose cell door was open and who had just received the coffee from the mangy negro, ran out when she heard Goldie's voice.

"Goldie!" she cried.

"Get out of here and into my car in the alley," Goldie ordered with words as staccato as machine gun fire—and he never took his eyes from the police matron.

Polack Annie ran to the door, where Cranky caught her by the arm. Goldie backed out, the two guns still leveled at the woman. At the door he thrust the automatics into their holsters, and reaching into his pocket drew out a twenty-dollar gold piece which he tossed at the toes of the terrified police matron.

"Thanks," he said, and was gone. The police matron first grabbed the coin, then turned and

grabbed the telephone. She clicked the hook frantically. There was no life—no response from the switchboard.

Goldie jumped into his car beside Polack Annie, whose cheeks were flushed with excitement.

"Let the siren loose, Ray," Goldie ordered.

Like the screech of a hundred devil-tortured souls the contraband scream tore the night. The car slid around the corner into the street and north. Zing—blop—came a shot at the south intersection.

"Damn!" muttered Goldie.

As he passed the front of the police building the door belched forth his eight men. Goldie grinned. He turned and looked back and saw confusion down the street. He saw Crip, too, the little negro stool, pulling the fire alarm box just in front of the police station. One of Goldie's men, running from the station, sent the negro sprawling, but Goldie had gone but a few blocks before he heard the sirens of the fire department.

"How in hell did I happen to overlook that," he muttered. Then he heard, too, the siren of the Chief's car—a siren he knew of old. The Chief had been in his office, two blocks distant,

trying to bestir his mind to some plan by which he could salvage his own skin. He had heard the shot on the corner and run down to his car.

Three of Goldie's autos were within sight, now—two ahead and one behind.

"Step on her, Ray," ordered Goldie, who had slid back the glass partition between him and the chauffeur. The car lunged forward and shot ahead of the other two.

"Up to the boulevard, then a block west, then north and double back," commanded Goldie.

Ray nodded. Goldie darted a glance behind.

"Not too fast now, boy," he warned. "Let these other cars catch up." The machine slowed down. They were clipping along at forty-five.

Directly in front at the intersection of Broad Street the traffic lights blocked them. A policeman stood in their path, his hand upraised. Ray never swerved his car, but kept the center of the street and the cop jumped to save himself. There was a thud on the rear pane of the sedan. The glass was shatter-proof and bullet-proof. Goldie felt the need of a smoke and took a cigarette from his case.

"Gimme one, Goldie," came a small voice from his side. Then: "Gawd!"

"Nerves, Babes," urged Goldie, passing his smoke to her.

They reached the boulevard, dodging cars, passing red lights and policemen. There were four of Goldie's cars behind him now and they formed a fast-moving procession. Behind, Goldie could hear the relentless siren of the Chief's roadster.

"He don't know what he's gettin' into," muttered Goldie. Then as they turned into the wide boulevard Goldie instructed:

"Cut this next corner on two and keep straight."

The chauffeur speeded up until the next corner. He fairly skidded around it, and as they turned the other four cars whizzed by. They had gone several blocks when Goldie saw the green lights of the police car turn into the street. He said nothing, but felt with both hands beneath his coat.

Ray was knocking off fifty now. The police car kept faster and gradually began to gain on them, and still Goldie gave no instructions to his chauffeur. After about fifteen blocks the

car was almost alongside. Goldie had turned down the window in the door.

"Hit it!" called Goldie.

With a lunge the limousine leaped forward like a frightened animal. Goldie, with something in his hand, leaned toward the window.

He drew back his arm and let fly. In a second his car was a full block ahead of the other and in a few moments the Chief's car had been left far behind. Then the chauffeur began a series of turns and finally they were in the country, speeding along at seventy.

The window of the car still was open and the fresh night air breezed in. Goldie inhaled deeply.

"The air's great, ain't it, Babes?" he asked.

"Any air's great outside that hole," commented Polack Annie.

Goldie switched on a little light in front of him and pushed back a panel. He began to dial the radio. Here was music from the Dresden Hotel. Now he had a night club. Then he got what he wanted.

"Municipal broadcasting station, RYNC," came through the speaker, concealed in the top of the car.—"The police have just captured one of the gangsters who to-night staged the

daring raid on Central Detail. He refused to give his name. The homicide squad is in pursuit of four cars. One was wrecked and abandoned three blocks from the station. The gangsters escaped. Two of them are believed to have been badly wounded. All hospitals have been warned to watch for them. The Chief of Police has personally taken charge of the round-up of these desperadoes who have dared to storm the Central Station itself, as a climax to an unprecedented . . ."

"Put on some music, Goldie," purred Polack Annie.

"Okay, Babes."

He turned on a jazz band. As the strident strains of the split-beat syncope came through, Polack Annie, a clutch in her voice, sank back and let go a sigh that was almost a sob:

"Gee, the Kid was a hot dancer."

Goldie leaned forward, opened his mouth, then said nothing for a moment. Half a minute later, to himself, he pondered:

"Who could it be them damn dumb cops nabbed?"

CHAPTER XII

With the burg buzzing over the incredible stick-up of Central Detail, the kidnaping of Polack Annie by Goldie Gorio in person (there was no secret about that) and the suckerizing of a great municipality by a handful of hoodlums, the newspaper boys foregathered in the outer room of the Chief. Eight of them, keenly alert, cynical, skeptical, practical, trained and gifted to X-ray the sham, hypocrisy, mendacity of those they handled—they sat around and bandied the subject in hand.

They felt no passion over fundamental right or wrong; to them it was "copy." They weren't indignant, and they weren't eloquent. The city's shame" might burn the editorial writers, but it only busied the news hounds. The Chief was in. He would see them in a minute.

They didn't play ping-pong with wisecracks, like reporters in the movies and the newspaper plays. They looked at their watches.

The Chief scarcely looked up as he sat be-

hind his flat desk. He seemed preoccupied with some reports he was penciling. When he lifted his face it was stubbled, saggy and haggard. And under his puffed-up left eye was a purple shiner.

Mifflin, dean of the police reporters, opened up with:

"That little party early this morning——"

"Meant the end of gangs, gangsters and gangsterism in this city," blurted the Chief. "There's a round-up on and we expect an important arrest in twenty-four hours. We know who planned and executed this job——"

"And who knocked off the Edgewater Kid——"

"And who settled Kinky King——"

"And who shut off the city lights and broke up the store windows——"

"And where Polack Annie's hiding out——"

"Just a moment, boys," cut in the Chief, with a hurt look. "I thought that at least you didn't talk and think like muggs. We've already got one of the mob."

"What's his name?"

"Ahah—that I can't spill yet."

"Well, he won't talk."

"He'll talk in seven languages. I'll—well,

he'll talk this time . . . and then maybe we'll get a conviction. It's an almost helpless, hopeless business, fighting organized gangsters. If we arrest them we can't get men to sit on juries, we can't get witnesses to testify; they've got the highest-priced lawyers and they hand us a habeas corpus or a writ to free the suspect on bail—and that's all of that pinch. If we beat 'em, they beat the rap on grounds of duress and violation of constitutional rights. Say, those babies have more constitutional rights than the Anti-Saloon League.

"The second one of 'em is in trouble, every politician starts pulling and hauling. No judge wants to hear the case, no prosecutor wants to push it. They're tangled into every network of politics, big business and even social stuff . . . but this time, if your papers give us a decent break instead of joining the ignorant readers and kidding and slamming us, we'll take 'em on. The Mayor is back of me a hundred per cent, and——"

"Why don't you run in Goldie Gorio?"

"I didn't say who we're going to arrest.

"You know that was the Gorio mob—and

Goldie did it with his own hands. We know a dozen people who recognized him."

"I know what gang it was and who was with it on this rotten trick. We'll clean up every last one of 'em, too, this time."

"Where is he? Where's Annie?"

"Now, I couldn't tell you that——"

"Not even if you knew?"

"Oh, behave . . . I tell you we'll have the bunch very soon. I've talked to the matron and the squadron men—we know, I tell you——"

"The whole world knows," snapped one of the reporters, looking for the twentieth time at his wrist watch. "But what's being *done?*"

"Everything—my whole force is out with instructions—every road at the city limits is plugged tight—that outfit couldn't get through in an airplane—and we're closing in on them. Is that good enough?"

"It's old enough."

"There you go again, bleating like a kid. What in hell *else* can we do?"

"Well, those birds seem to think up new and original ideas—sticking up Central Detail——"

"Yeggs stick up banks, too, don't they? Who could anticipate such a nutty putover as that one? Now that it did come off, we'll go after the guilty parties. I'm on the job. I haven't been to bed or out of these clothes in two days—print that—that's all."

The reporters rose. One of them, sliding off the desk, naïvely asked:

"Would it be too personal, Chief, to inquire how you got that blinker?"

"Oh, no; that's all right."

"A swinging door?"

"No. You know, of course, that I chased those cars myself—and if I'd had my regular driver, I'd have cut them off. I was working late here in my office when I heard shooting. My driver was taking two hours off—he hadn't slept. So I grabbed the patrolman downstairs and ordered him to take the wheel. He's good—but not experienced enough for that mob. They even shook off the fire department.

"Well, I got close enough to shoot. I was leveling my gun again when something flew up and hit me right here—a pebble or a cinder or something—out of nowhere—thrown up by one of the autos, I s'pose—and that spoiled my shot, because this time I had a bead on an open

window and was going to let one of them have it—hot break of luck that was, huh?''

The Chief rubbed his eye gently. He got up and stretched, put his thumbs down his belt and hitched up his trousers.

Out of the cuff of one leg popped a twenty-dollar gold piece.

Polack Annie!

The papers shrieked with her. Her pictures were starred. Who was this red-headed celebrity that a metropolis should be paralyzed, scandalized, booberized over her in a series of the wildest and boldest and wickedest open outbreaks ever pulled off by gangsters?

Violent deeds by the notorious beer runners and dope shovers and racketeers were commonplace. But behind them was always a motive—profit. If they killed for revenge, that, too was for profit; it was the only way they had of maintaining their organizations and personnel and enforcing their gun-made and gun-kept rights to rich territories, to output plants, to transportation and distribution and monopoly.

But this was no reprisal work. If the Gorios were shooting up the Kinky Kings, that would

be simple enough—and who would care? The Edgewater Kid had been bumped off, and blood must pay for that. But who was this sweetie of his that such goings-on could be precipitated over her?

She couldn't be rated as a member of the Goldie mob. Such gangs have no female workers. Romantic stories about girls working with gunmen had to do with small stick-up groups who robbed delicatessen stores, but not with wealthy and serious money trusts like Gorio's. If there could be such a thing as a living love story behind this set of flaming deeds, what could that story be?

She had been Kinky's girl and she had left the West Side general for a North Side private in the Goldie ranks. If that had been why the Kid was slaughtered, well and good —it was unusual, but King's temper and swaggering ego were famous enough to explain such a breach of the code, such a deviation from the policy of conducting inter-gang diplomacies for gang purposes and not for personal fracases.

Then King had been mysteriously killed, in very unganglike fashion, in his own home instead of on a lonely road at the end of a ride or on a sidewalk or by a shotgun fusilade sweep-

ing by him outside. Annie might have done that. She would know how to get into his home. Or someone of King's own men might have taken him in a quarrel—very unlikely, but possible.

Anyway instead of the Gorios and the Kings thereupon starting in to massacre each other, came the undreamt-of raids by Goldie's flock. First because the police had refused to free Polack Annie, and then to free her by force in a manner that had never been known in American history.

What secret did she hold?

Or what was her hold on Gorio—known as a man with an eye for a pretty girl, but better known as a monarch of a huge enterprise which couldn't bear endangering by forcing a city to fight him to death where he had prospered in practical security?

The papers offered large rewards for her recapture.

The offers looked good.

Wherever she was, she was under Goldie Gorio's protection and in his custody.

The Chief was giving these quandaries and a few hundred more some profound study. It was very complicated. So was his situation.

CHAPTER XIII

When the reporters had gone, the Chief sat for a long time at his desk, nervously puffing at his cigar. As his secretary ran in and out he gave to him always the same message:

"I'm in conference and can't be disturbed."

He was revolving in his mind a plan and he had just reached the conclusion when the telephone rang. It was the Mayor.

"Come into my office at once—that committee will be here in half an hour."

The Chief smiled to himself. He walked with resolute stride to the Mayor's office, and when he entered he smiled the broader when he saw the harassed countenance of His Honor.

"Don't worry any more, Highguy," he said confidently. "Our troubles are over. I've got the thing all worked out."

"Yes, you've had it all worked out for a long time now," declared the Mayor, looking out the window.

"Well, now, I have."

"You may have it all worked out, but what

am I going to tell these people when they come up here? Insult upon insult has been flung at us by this mob. We'll never explain this off."

The Chief patted the Mayor on the back and sat down and talked with him fifteen minutes. He spoke without cessation, as a man inspired. When he had finished the beclouded face of the Mayor cleared and he was smiling, too.

"I believe it will work, Leo," he said.

"Hell, it can't muff. I can steam them guys up so that they will stick up the City Hall and the First National Bank at the same time. Believe! Man, know!"

"It listens good, but how are we going to convince this committee—you can't tell them your idea. They would never approve it. They have lost confidence in us now. What are you going to say?"

"I'll tell them. I'm going through with this. I'm going the limit. Look at this eye—don't you think I'm going the limit?"

The Mayor noticed the swollen optic of the Chief for the first time.

"Goldie?" he asked.

"Hmph! Goldie and his gold. That was the payoff."

The Chief rubbed his eyes meditatively.

"How long are you going to ask for?" asked the Mayor.

"A week, give or take a little," replied the Chief.

"I don't believe they will ever stand for it—they'll go right after our heads pretty."

"Stall 'em—you can——"

The Mayor and the Chief were still talking when the members of the committee were announced. The Mayor adjusted his tie and smoothed out his coat lapels. The Chief walked out the private door.

The committee, now augmented to fourteen, debouched from the door and formed a skirmish line before the Mayor's desk. The Mayor was standing, his countenance serious, and he bowed to each in turn. If the visit of the committee the first time had been grim and determined, this time it smacked of belligerence and impatience.

For a moment nothing was said, then Merchant Sam Mandlebaum, who acted as spokesman, began:

"Mr. Mayor, we were here to see you twenty-four hours ago and you promised that you would have this disgraceful situation in hand. But things have become worse—unspeakably

so. We have now come to inform you that we are making a direct appeal to the Governor of the State to place this town under martial law and to rid us once and forever of the oppression of gang rule."

The Mayor cleared his throat and held up his hand.

"Mr. Spokesman and members of your committee," began the Mayor in an even voice. "I will not dwell on the fact that the events of the last two nights have been somewhat exaggerated.

"There are times when things appear for the worse and make for the better. We are likely to get far less criticism for the kidnaping of this girl, Polack Annie, than we would have had we brought her to trial, neglecting the real killers and clouding the case. For, within the last few hours, I have received information which shows me clearly that had we tried to convict her we would have made a laughingstock of justice. She had nothing to do with killing that notorious gangster, Kinky King.

"At last I have found the key to the whole thing and I can now assure you the solution of our troubles is imminent. The gangsters have

only walked into a trap which will mean their almost immediate extinction."

"Words mean nothing to us, Mr. Mayor," interjected Mrs. Guernsey Taylor. But the Mayor was not listening. He had picked up his telephone and was saying, "Come into my office at once, Leo.

"I would ask you to listen to our Chief of Police," he announced as the Chief walked in.

"Leo," said the Mayor, glancing about at the tense, determined countenances before him, "I want you to explain, as far as possible, the idea we formulated for the eradication of the Goldie Gorio gang."

The Chief walked beside the Mayor. He stood before the committee with confidence on his face. Several of the committee whispered together, while others remained silent and frowned.

"I don't know just what His Honor, the Mayor, has told you," began the Chief, "but I will waste no words. In the first place, we have learned that it was the Gorio gang which ordered and executed the killing of Kinky King. And this after a peace agreement had been reached. The plan the Mayor and I have agreed upon is a drastic one. I only beg that

you allow us to carry it through and offer no criticism for the manner in which we do it. Should you call in the State militia, as has been suggested, you might have peace for a short time. The gangs merely will lay low. The militia do not understand how to deal with gangsters, while the police do. Furthermore the police of this city are citizens here and have the interests of the municipality at heart. Outsiders would not.

"All that the Mayor and I ask is patience of you, who represent the biggest interests of the city. And we ask your indulgence to carry through our plan, which will put an end to gangsters in the only way they understand. Do you understand?"

He smiled grimly and tongued his lips.

"And this method of yours," asked Mr. Mandelbaum, "how long will it take for you to accomplish it?"

"Less than a week," replied the Chief, "to kill off gang rule in this city. Kill it off—that is my promise—my plan will be executed. I mean my plan will be ready for execution——"

"I trust there will be no murders," said a minister.

"No—no, not murder," replied the Chief.

"Of course there will be—h'm—casualties. But not murders!"

The committeemen for a moment seemed to be undecided. The forceful, direct and deadly manner in which the Chief had gone at it no doubt had made an impression on some of them.

"If you will allow us to retire a moment," suggested Mr. Mandelbaum, "we will give you our decision."

"You are welcome to my office—make yourselves at home here," courteously said the Mayor, taking the Chief by the arm and walking out the private door.

"Well, Leo, have we got them?" anxiously queried the Mayor when they entered the anteroom. "You sure told 'em."

"If that minister and those two dames don't get sentimental, we're in the driver's seat. And I'll make good. This won't be a murder. It'll be a slaughter. Leave it to Leo!"

CHAPTER XIV

Big Joe Gleason had taken up the work that Kinky King had left unfinished when Kinky King was left finished. They called Gleason the "Secretary" because he was so handy with the typewriter. And his typewriter was the make that wrote one hundred and twenty-five words the minute and every word was cruel, leaden and penetrating. The patron muse of Secretary Gleason's typewriter was Death.

He had learned to operate the "mill" overseas in a machine gun unit. The work fascinated him. He had been drafted into it. But when he came back he adopted it as his profession.

Right-hand man to Kinky himself he had become. And when they found his chief laid out in an undignified and ungraceful lump on the rug of his own rococo apartment, beside him a gilt magazine revolver and a lipstick, Secretary Gleason took over the mantle of President King.

He was a large man, with a flat nose and

square jaw. Open viciousness shot from his pale gray eyes. No cunning, no treachery; here was a butcher. He affected no uppity ways and had little traffic with women. He lived in a small room in the fastnesses of his West Side domain, where his landlady thought him a hard-working day laborer—often working nights.

Born under a dock, he had early gone to sea. He deserted ship in New York and drifted West, leaving his scars on Newark and Pittsburgh and other centers where his trade—murder—drew a living wage. He had learned hard ways from hard men, before the mast and behind the rod. His postgraduate degree had been won in stir. On the fields of Flanders he had absorbed the insignificance of manslaughter. So when he went into the liquor racket, the lowest avocation that deluded fanatics had ever pressed into the brow of a defenseless people, he had no more conscience than a hyena.

The day the newspapers threw spasms over the latest gangster atrocity, the raid of the Gorio gang on Central Detail and the abduction of Polack Annie, Secretary Gleason called a council of his blacklegs in the foul, smelly

cellar of one of the gang's cutting plants. Rarely was seen a tougher congregation than this Sanhedrin of Kinky King's survivors. Man for man, they measured up with the best product of prohibition.

Pete Ferrone and Pinky Shapiro we have already met; they had been sent forth to clip the Edgewater Kid. With them sat Yiddles Moscowich, a rotund, ruddy, pleasant-faced little Galician fellow, with twinkling brown eyes in his head and black murder in his heart. And Ratface Charlie, whose sharp beak and bloodless lips designated him a scavenger in his heart. And Fats Ryan, a crimson-cheeked Irishman, who scorned the gats of his time for a lead pipe wrapped in newspaper, a shameful improvement on the honest shillalah of his forebears. And Nigger Sam Jenkins, a giant ex-yegg with gorilla arms and paws. Scarnose Miko, a Portuguese hill bandit, who had served his hitch among his own and had fled here from the bloody vengeance of the brethren he had betrayed. Greeks, wops, micks, kikes, Czechs—a score of them—as ungodly a crew as ever spat.

They made their own laws and lived by them. Their laws were primitive and simple. A de-

cent citizen was a one-way sucker; a law breaker was a two-way worker. There was only one punishment—death. The code was—don't know nothin'.

Secretary Gleason semicircled his glance over them like a panoramic camera. He filliped back his derby hat, spread his feet and let go his say-so, which was sweet and straight:

"I want ev'ry one o' youse to stay here an' stand by. I got the office t'-day that we're settin' pretty. We got Goldie Gorio an' his mob in the bag—not one of 'em, but all of 'em. We wipe 'em out an' we get hunk for Kinky an' we cop their territory. That's pickin's. Nobody leaves here till I get back. . . . C'mon, Ratface—kick the car."

"To Bandy's," he ordered as his driver spun the engine.

The auto stopped. Gleason went in, passed a long bar and opened a heavy metal door in the rear with two keys. Inside was an office, an ornate one for Gleason. It was a heritage from Kinky. Gleason picked up the French handset, fumbled, talked into the receiving end, got it adjusted with an oath, and in low voice called a number.

"Yeah—me," he said. "T'rough the alley

an' I'll let you in the back way. Come alone."

He walked into the bar and motioned for whisky. Bandy Gluntz, the vassal in charge, opened a little cabinet and drew forth a bottle of the uncut stuff and set it up. Gleason threw in a stiff slug and shoved the water aside. Then he said a few words to Gluntz in an undertone.

"Right you got, boss," affirmed the bartender. He touched a buzzer and from above came three worthies. Bandy whispered to them. They went through a small side door and up a narrow, short flight of steps to a balcony that surrounded the office. In the wall, concealed from within by curtains, were slots each big enough to admit the muzzle of a sawed-off rifle. The men could see into the lighted room; they could not be seen.

Gleason closed the door to the bar, opened another armored door into the alley ajar, and stood peering out. Up the passage, unattended, walked a stocky man with square shoulders and an air of authority. His hands hung free. Gleason stepped back, leaving the entrance open. The Chief of Police entered. He wore civvies.

"Sit down," invited Gleason. He shoved a

decanter and a glass toward his visitor. The Chief poured himself a shot and downed it.

"Chief," said the Secretary, "I never done business d'rec' wit' the law. I got your message an' I'm takin' the chance. There's forty men knows where I am an' who I'm wit'. If anything drops on me——"

"Joe," interrupted the Chief, "we nailed one of Goldie's outfit last night, and he coughed up his guts."

"I don' believe it," snapped Gleason.

"We gave him the fourth degree. He cracked. He spilled the works—who clipped Kinky King, why and how, and the way they're framing to spot a few more of you, mainly yourself."

"Oh, yeah? It'll take more'n that bunch o' squirrel poppers to——

"They won't get to first base. I've got a proposition for you."

"I know—you want me an' my mob to blow the racket, then you'll handle the Gorios, an' they'll build you a monument in the park. Nothin' doin'. We'll pay our p'tection like we always did an' we'll p'tect ourself like we always did."

"Don't get all hot and bothered, Joe. You

were never wronger in your life. Now, listen: Cops dassen't kill."

"Oh, no-o-o-o?"

"No. We can't shoot men down unless we catch 'em in the act. No use our pinching any of that gang, either. Who'd testify? Who'd prosecute? Who'd sit on a jury? They'd raise a million dollars bail, get crooked lawyers and straight lawyers and run us dizzy and beat the rap in the finish. Now, the word I sent you is on the up-and-up. I'll tell you when and where. You and your boys go to it. I'm in with you—and, again, I ain't. No harness men on that beat when you spring action. 'Came to their death by homicide at hands unknown,' says the coroner. I'm dumb. I don't know. How about it?"

Gleason slowly poured himself a drink. He held the mellow rye to the light and watched the oily globules float on top to the edge. He flung it into his throat and gulped. He set down the little glass.

"I like it," he said.

"The proposition?" eagerly exclaimed the Chief.

"No, the hooch. It's the real McCoy. If I was as sure o' you as I am o' that——"

"Don't be a damn imbecile. Would I come here, alone, like this? Would I cross you through your own brother-in-law, who's a precinct captain, who got us together? Would I double-team you as raw and as clumsy as this?"

"N-no. If a copper can be on the level, I guess you are this time. Lead your ace. What's exac'ly the trick you want turned?"

The Chief leaned far forward, rested his elbows on the desk and talked rapidly, incisively. Joe's eyes lighted up for the first time. He listened on and said nothing. The Chief drew little diagrams with his index finger on the polished mahogany surface. He motioned with his two hands. He hit his right fist on the board and made the glasses dance. He put his nose almost into Secretary Gleason's mouth as he strained nearer.

". . . and, Joe, here's my hand on it," he wound up. "Goldie gets his . . . I get mine . . . you get yours—you wipe out that mob and you wipe out the murder of Kinky King . . . and you get that whole North Side."

Secretary Gleason took the hand—the first time he had taken the hand of a copper in his life.

CHAPTER XV

Polack Annie awoke at two o'clock in the afternoon of the day she had been snatched from the detention cell at Police Headquarters —awoke in a gilded cage. She slowly opened her eyes, conscious for a moment that she was in strange surroundings, and she stared upward. She seemed to be in a little tent, the top of which was draped in aureated silk that ran in regular pleats from a large, round button, after the manner of ceilings in night clubs.

Hardly turning her head she looked through a pair of draped curtains on her right and the sunlight illuminated a large room the like of which Polack Annie had never before seen. Her mind began to clear now and tumbled back over the events of the early day—her rescue, the wild ride, the night club vododeo from the sedan radio and then—oblivion. She had passed out in the car, softly weeping as she thought of the Kid. No vivid memory of how she had come here, or how or when she had gotten to bed.

She was wide awake now. She threw back the covers and sat over the edge, rubbing her eyes, swollen from the first good sleep in days.

She threw back her head, yawned audibly, and stretched her willowy arms. The vitality of her youthful body surged back to her. She stood up, and then for the first time noticed that she was clad in purple pajamas—trimmed with gold!

"Gawd!" she exclaimed.

The U-shaped bed on which she had slept, and which was canopied in silk, stood on a dais. She stepped down and walked to the window. Outside she saw a spacious lawn. The trees had been nipped by the first frost of autumn and the leaves were tinted like a thousand little palettes. The window was half open and a refreshing breeze stole into the room. Annie inhaled deeply.

She began a tour of inspection of the room. In soft, golden tones was depicted on the ceiling the legend of Jason on his quest of the Golden Fleece. To Annie it was merely a pretty picture.

Her bare feet sank deep into the soft Chinese carpet. The chairs were fragile and gilded. A vase sat in the middle of a gilt spider-legged

table. In it were fresh yellow roses. Annie gathered them into her arms and inhaled their fragrance.

As she was moving about the room, admiring this bit of bric-a-brac and that picture, the door opened softly and a yellow-skinned maid, a small white apron over her dress, stood smiling in the doorway. Across her arm were two large Turkish towels and in her hands she held several bottles and a huge sponge.

"Is Madam ready for her bath?" politely asked the maid.

Polack Annie for a moment could not speak. Then she said:

"I'm hungrier'n hell."

"Madam will feel better after she has had her bath," spoke the inscrutable maid, advancing. "But what would you like for breakfast?"

"Orange juice, buckwheat cakes, ham and eggs, toast and coffee," unhesitatingly answered Annie.

The phlegmatic servant bowed and walked to a little doll, which was standing on a small table. She lifted it up and disclosed a gold-plated telephone.

"Send Madam orange juice, buckwheat cakes,

ham and eggs, toast and coffee," she ordered. Then she turned and walked to a door which she opened at the turn of a golden knob. She went in and Annie heard the water running in the tub. The maid appeared at the door and motioned to her.

Annie hesitated on the threshold and peered inside. It was the largest bathroom she had ever seen. It was half as big as the bedroom. The floors and walls were tessellated in small yellow and black cubes. The tub was sunken—on the level with the floor. It was already half filled and the water looked bluish and inviting. At one end was a dressing table and arrayed on it were innumerable articles of the toilet—all in solid gold—like the plumbing.

Annie entered gingerly. She waited for the maid to leave, and when she saw that the servant had no intention of doing so she boldly jerked off her pajamas and stepped into the tepid water. The maid knelt beside the tub and began to lather her back. But Annie took the sponge and soap from her. She floundered in the large bathtub and for a moment the joy of living pulsed through her slender, lithe body.

A cold shower and then the maid dried her, even to her small, pink toes. She found a com-

plete outfit—tweed suit, stockings, small walking shoes—all laid out for her. Her breakfast had been brought in on a castered table and her chair was invitingly half turned.

When she had eaten, the maid announced:

"Mr. Gorio left word that if you wished to take a walk he would have an escort for you."

Polack Annie looked out the window and then nodded assent.

Downstairs a tall, not unhandsome fellow was waiting. He had two large, tawny-haired police dogs on a leash. Annie nodded to him and started out over the lawn.

"There's a path over there leading through the woods," said her guide, who followed behind her.

She took the little tanbark path which led directly into the forest. The trail was labyrinthian. She was now lost in a wilderness of great trees, and then she came upon a small lake, in the center of which was a miniature lighthouse. She walked on and on and she thought the loveliness would never end, when suddenly a sharp turn brought her in view of the squat, stone mansion which seemed to be built directly into the hill in back of it and formed a part of it.

When she walked through the front door the maid was there to meet her.

"Mr. Gorio said he would meet you in the living room when you returned," she announced. She led the girl to where there were large comfortable chairs of golden oak, upholstered in leather. Predominating one side of the room was a huge fireplace, with massive andirons, upon which lay several unlighted logs. Big French windows opened out on the slope of the front lawn.

Annie sank into one of the chairs and sighed. She was pleasantly tired.

"Well, Babes, do you feel better?"

It was Goldie, who had come in behind her. He took a chair near her and lit up a cigarette. Annie smiled at him.

"You can stay here, Babes, until everything's ironed out. You can have anything you want. Just ask for it."

"You got a great layout here, Goldie," she sighed. "I never knew such things could be —outside o' books!"

Then she looked at him a bit quizzically.

"But—but why, Goldie, do you do all this for me—take all these chances?" she asked.

"Babes," and Goldie leaned forward and

looked at her through half-closed eyes, eyes in which she could not read the intense passion dampered in their depths, "the Edgewater Kid was like a son to me. I blew up a whole town for him. You were his girl. I feel the same toward you."

He arose and patted her cheek and she heard the door close behind her. Annie dug into her pocket for her handkerchief.

"He loved the Kid, too—God be good to him," she sobbed.

CHAPTER XVI

The Chief told "Secretary" Gleason, the enemy gang leader, that Chimp had "coughed up his guts"—but Chimp hadn't. The Chief only hoped he would. In fact, the first twenty-four hours Chimp spent in the detention pen, after he had been so ingloriously captured on the early morning Goldie Gorio stuck up Central Detail and abducted Polack Annie, were the most pleasant he had ever spent in jail.

The only thing that bothered him was his broken nose, which had been smashed with a double sawbuck gold piece by Goldie two days before, when Chimp spoke out of turn. But this injury was given the best medical treatment, at the direction of the police. The cops were plenty courteous to Chimp, and he chuckled.

"Goldie's got these bulls hypped," he meditated.

Then little things began to bother Chimp. The first of these was when the lockup keeper glanced at his shoes and suggested:

"How about a little shine, Chimp?"

Chimp's shoes were a bit nondescript. So he took them off and gave them to the lockup. But he never got them back. Whenever he asked for them, the lockup would apologize and Chimp could hear his angry voice outside:

"I'm tellin' you for the last time, go out and get Chimp's shoes for him—he'll catch cold this way. I got orders to treat him extra nice."

"But the shop's closed—it's a Greek holiday," whined another voice.

Then Chimp decided to order cigarettes. He smoked only one brand. They brought him some exotic cigarettes of pungent Turkish tobacco. He refused them at first, but finally had to smoke them, when the lockup amiably told him that he had no one just then to send out for his favorite kind.

"No wonder dese guys are coppers," muttered Chimp. "Dey're too ignorant to be anyt'in' else."

His meditations were interrupted when two detectives appeared at his cell and affably announced:

"The Captain wants to see you a minute, Chimp."

So they marched him out of the cell and up

forty-two steel, corrugated steps to the Captain's office, laughing and joking all the way. Chimp didn't relish this climb in his stocking feet.

"Dat's no good for my dogs," he demurred. The Captain smiled at him and asked:

"By the way, Chimp, I want to get my records straight—what did you say your mother's maiden name was?"

"I ain't said," snapped Chimp, peevishly.

"Okay, boys, take him back," and the Captain arose and bowed to Chimp. Then, down forty-two steel corrugated steps. In his cell Chimp rubbed his soles through his stocking feet.

"Dem dumb fools!" he exclaimed. Then he yelled through the bars, "Where'n hell are my shoes."

"We'll get 'em as quick as we can," cheerfully called the Chief Screw.

Pretty soon a detective brought Chimp his favorite cigarettes. Chimp did not have a match.

"Gimme a light," he said.

The bull felt in his pockets and found one match after diligent search. He struck it and held it up and just as Chimp stuck his cigarette

through the bars, the detective snapped the match out.

"Dammit, I burnt my finger!" he exclaimed. He could not find another match. The lockup didn't have one. Chimp would have to wait until he went for one. But he didn't come back. Instead, after about ten minutes the two bulls who had taken him to the Captain before, reappeared.

"The Captain wants to see you, Chimp," they grinned.

"What t'hell does he want now?" moodily asked the prisoner. The cell door clanged open. Out. Up forty-two steel, corrugated steps in his stocking feet. Chimp was swearing now.

"What do you know about the stick-up of that cigar store at—" the Captain began in sugary tones.

"I don't know nuttin'," petulantly replied Chimp. He had the unlighted cigarette still dangling from his lips. "I want me shoes——"

"Okay, boys, take him back," and the Captain busied himself with some papers on his desk.

"Say, gimme a light, will youse?" Chimp asked. The two detectives began to search

their pockets. One of them found a safety match.

"I ain't got nothing to strike it on," he said sadly.

"Strike it on the windowpane," said Chimp. The detective went to the window and tried to strike the match. He broke it off right at the head.

"We'll get you a match—later," he said. Then—down forty-two steel, corrugated steps and the metallic ridges bit deep into the tender bottoms of Chimp's feet.

"S-a-y, what're youse buzzards tryin' to do to me?" he asked when they had taken him back to his cell. The two dicks appeared surprised.

"Why, Chimp," one of them said in a hurt voice, "we've been better to you than any prisoner I ever saw in this joint. By the way, what do you want for supper?"

Chimp, who had removed his socks and was rubbing his feet, brightened up somewhat.

"Gimme a sirloin steak, rare, wid onions," he began, "and some strong black coffee an' some French fried spuds—an' don't forget dem damn matches and dem damn shoes!"

"Okay, Chimp," said the bull, "right away.

You don't have to swear to get service here."

In fifteen minutes the supper came. When it was uncovered Chimp found a small hamburger steak, fried to a crisp, mashed potatoes and—weak tea. Before he could protest, the two bulls were at his cell door.

"The Captain wants to see you, Chimp," they announced in polite tones.

"Where's me shoes?" asked Chimp. "Me matches—me steak—me coffee—what the——"

But the dicks had already opened the cell door and were bowing to Chimp. They took him gently by the arms and led him—up forty-two steel, metallically spiked steps to the Captain's office.

"What year were you born, Chimp?" apologetically asked the Captain, arising on Chimp's entrance.

"I ain't spillin' nothin'!" fairly shouted Chimp.

"Okay, boys, take him back," and the Captain sat down, still smiling. But Chimp pulled away from the dicks.

"I wanna make a beef, Captain!" exclaimed Chimp. The Captain looked surprised, and then nodded. "I ain't bein' treated right.

I ain't got no shoes—I ain't got no matches—I ain't got no eats—I ain't got no nothin' what a man should have."

The Captain's brow clouded. He looked menacingly at the two detectives.

"Now, what's this?" he admonished. "I told you I wanted this man treated with best of care. See what he wants and *get it!* I don't want to hear any more complaints from him."

Down forty-two steel, razor-edged steps to his cell. When he arrived he saw a man inside calmly eating the last of his supper.

"Say, Lockup!" called one of the dicks, "how'n hell did this fellow get in Chimp's cell —chuck him out."

The lockup appeared worried and hustled the man out, the latter wiping his lips. When he had gone, Chimp found he had taken his cigarettes, too.

All during the night the detectives appeared at regular intervals, apologetically and solicitously, and marched Chimp up and down forty-two hellishly barbed metallic steps in his stocking feet. And every fifteen minutes the Captain asked him some outlandish question, courteously and politely, and then scolded and

stormed at the detectives for not attending to Chimp's wants.

Once Chimp got his cigarette lighted, when the detective stumbled and fell against him and knocked it to the floor, where he stepped on it. When the sun pinked the heavens in the east the little gangster was raving in his cell.

"Captain wants you," said the two dicks gayly.

"What t'hell do youse guys want? Gimme a match. Oh, my poor dogs! Lemme out o' here! What t'hell youse want! I can't climb up. Let him come down. Gimme a match." They dragged him up forty-two steel, corrugated, white-hot steps—the American Inquisition was about over.

Chimp was ready to spill his guts!

CHAPTER XVII

Goldie Gorio and his entire gang were "under cover" at Goldenrod Manor. They were lying low until Goldie could learn a few things —and then Goldie would act after his own fashion.

In the rear and to the side of Goldie's stone mansion were a score of little bungalows, concealed almost as well as was the huge structure —built to conform with the terrain—built so that they seemed a part of the landscape from a distance. In these bungalows were housed Goldie's gang—all but Chimp.

The men played cards, drank and sat around all day. They were forbidden to show themselves until Goldie ordered. Their cars were locked in a huge garage, built into the hill.

Goldie's estate consisted of sixty acres. It was a hilly, wooded section, thirty miles from the Big Burg. The entrance to his place was through a huge steel gate which was locked. Two guards, ex-cons, watched the gate night and day. Running around the estate was a

high steel wire fence, with wicked barbs curving outward over the top. At night a dozen fierce police dogs roamed the grounds and four men walked along the inside of the fence day and night. At five different points were telephones concealed in the underbrush, by which the alarm could be spread quickly.

The house itself was a fortress. The innocent-looking French windows in the front could be protected at any moment by huge steel shutters which dropped when a button was pressed. In the front of the house were small slots through which the noses of rifles and typewriters could be poked. The sloping front yard, cleared of trees, could be effectively swept with a death-dealing fire. And this was the only approach to the house.

In that section Goldie was known as Mr. August Maher, a contractor in the Big Burg. So far his identity had been well concealed and nothing had happened which would excite suspicion in the community. Goldie felt secure here. He could make his last stand in case of trouble. The only thing worrying him was the arrest of Chimp. Yet he had full reliance in Chimp. The cops would never be able to break him down. Chimp and Monk were his

most trusted men, and although he had brutally shut the mouth of Chimp when he broke his beak, he knew that this would not affect his vassal's loyalty. Because Goldie knew something about Chimp and Chimp knew that Goldie knew. Goldie would have turned him up at the slightest rebellion. Goldie could get away with it.

Through the grapevine, Goldie had learned a number of things in the last few days. One was the belligerent attitude of the Kinky King gang since the ascendancy of Secretary Gleason. But the grapevine had not informed Goldie of two important things—the Chief's visit to Gleason and the ratting of Chimp.

Goldie now decided to anticipate the move of the Kinky King mob, since it was to be war. He would follow military tactics. His strategic move would be—a good offensive is the best defensive. He would wipe the gang out before the gang had a chance to wipe him out.

Only one thing made him hesitate—Polack Annie. The beautiful, titian-haired girl was his objective now. He was madly in love with Polack Annie, though none guessed it. Not even the sensitive intuition of woman made

Polack Annie aware of it. She was deluded into thinking that Goldie's unique interest in her was grounded on his intense love for the Edgewater Kid, her lover who had died because of her love for him.

Goldie made no bold overtures to the girl. He was pleasant to her at arm's length—yet it took all his steel will power to keep him from taking her, willing or no. Goldie did not want her by force or mere convenience. He wanted his wild love returned, and in every way he sought to inspire in her some interest in himself beyond gratitude.

Of course, men had taken Polack Annie before—for trifles. But that was before she had met the Edgewater Kid. Her passion for him had changed her whole life. It had awakened in her a loathing for all other men—when before she had accepted their attentions with indifference. It had made a woman of her.

The Edgewater Kid had become a sanctified memory to her now. Thoughts of him had found a shrine in her heart and she no longer wept over him. With her hallowed love and every material wish granted, Polack Annie was not unhappy. The peacefulness of the

country soothed her grief. The lavish attentions which Goldie showered upon her eased her pain.

She did begin to think of Goldie in a favorable light. He had been like a father to the Edgewater Kid. He was like a foster-father to her. He did not pester her like other men had done. And she respected him for it.

They had long walks together, and Goldie would always terminate them by some sentimental blurb for her dead lover. He would press her hand consolingly or pat her cheek—but there seemed no sinister significance to these gestures. Sometimes she thought he did look strangely at her, but he offset that by his other actions. Polack Annie began to feel that she owed Goldie much for his kindness.

So, when she learned that the Kinky King mob was planning to start trouble over the death of their leader, she told Goldie one night:

"Goldie," she began seriously, "there ain't no use of your gang takin' the rap for the killin' of Kinky King."

"Why not?" asked Goldie, surprised.

"I killed that hog," she answered, looking out through the French window into the purple twilight.

Goldie waited for her to continue. When she said nothing more, he caught her hand and intoned softly:

"I know it, Babes, I knew it because it was pulled with that gold automatic I gave the Edgewater Kid for knockin' off Lefty Pete. And, Babes, that was one reason why I wasn't goin' to take no chances of 'em nailin' that rap on you—why I stuck up Central an' took you away. I was afraid they might make it stick—fingerprints or somethin'—or third-degree you an' break you—though I knew they pinched you to give the papers somethin' to talk about."

"I killed him," dreamily continued Polack Annie, "because he killed the only man I ever loved. I knew he was goin' to croak him the night the Kid took me to the Devil's Hall. I saw it in his eyes that night. I knew that drunken devil. When he saw us, the Kid was on the spot!"

She began to weep softly. Goldie patted her hand.

"There, there, Babes, don't cry," he urged.

"I knocked him off with a smile," exclaimed Polack Annie, straightening up, her tear-starred eyes sparkling. "He took the only man

I ever loved. When I left him for the Kid I still had a key to his flat. I knew just when to go there—just when the swine would be good and soused. An' before I let him have it I sobered him up—sober enough to know why. He was beggin', prayin'—then I plugged him!"

Her slender body was quivering. Goldie put his arm around her shoulders gently, and her red-crested head fell on his chest. But she straightened almost instantly.

"There ain' no use of you and the mob takin' that rap, Goldie," she said softly. "I done that job. I don' care what happens to me. Let 'em burn me up, Goldie—or let Gleason an' his mob take me for a ride—I done it. You been too kind to me—to me an' the Kid—for me to let you get this fall."

"Now, listen, Babes," Goldie began sternly. "What's been done's done. You ain' walkin' into no rap—see? The Kid was like a son to me——"

He paused and pressed her to him.

"—And, Babes, I love you!"

She tore herself loose, fiercely.

"You—what!" she shrilled.

"I love you—like—a daughter!"

"Oh-h-h!"

CHAPTER XVIII

The whine of tires on the wet street ended in a groan as the lean khaki-colored car, rain curtains up, swung around the corner of the drab criminal courts building and stopped opposite the high gray walls of the county jail, in front of a plate glass window marked:

Hennessy Surety Co.
Bail Bonds
S. Goldman, Pres.

The driver silently pulled his cap down over his glass eye, lit a cigarette with a sulky gesture and settled down to wait.

The small man beside him opened the door as the car jerked to a stop, and slipped out, buttoning his blue coat tightly about his lean figure.

He looked swiftly up and down the street and then brushed past a stocky fellow lounging at the door on the far side of the window, and climbed swiftly up the narrow, creaking

stairs to a dusty door on the second floor, on which could be discerned the label:

"Bigelow Q. Weems, Attorney and Counsellor at Law."

Noiselessly he tried the knob, gently releasing it when he found the door locked. He pressed an old-fashioned white enamel bell button, and stood close to the door as a bell hummed inside and a shadow appeared on the opaqued glass.

The door opened suddenly, silently, but closed as suddenly after pale green eyes peered searchingly through thick lenses. That is, the door started to close.

The compact visitor sprang into the breach, doubled his elbows in a peculiar manner, and slipped inside.

"Er—Mr. Weems is—er—in court to-day," the spectacled clerk mumbled nervously.

The small person glanced swiftly at several shifty-faced men and worried women sitting in the waiting room. Then, smiling faintly, he turned and murmured:

"Tell him Goldie sent me."

The clerk, coughing in embarrassment, hesitated, and in that moment the visitor walked across the room and let himself into the door

on which the word "Private" was printed under the name of Mr. Weems.

In the shadow, behind a littered desk, beside a dusty window, the shining bald head sprang up and nervous fingers adjusted thick horn-rimmed spectacles resting on a magnificently huge nose, magnifying quick, black eyes.

"What's the big idea?" snapped Mr. Weems.

"Goldie sent me," replied the visitor with authority.

Weems stared for a moment, then turned abruptly to a seated client:

"Wait outside."

Startled, the man hurried out.

"Well, speak up quickly; I can only give you two minutes," Weems snapped. "I didn't recognize you, Big Ears."

The visitor lighted a fresh cigarette, to which he helped himself from a box on Weems's crowded desk.

"Goldie said to bring you out to Silver Lake. He wants to see you," he responded, after inhaling deeply.

"Nonsense. Doesn't the absurd idiot know I'm up to my neck in work?"

"He said to bring you," Big Ears repeated softly.

Weems stared silently for a long minute.

"The damn fool," he said finally. "Oh, all right. But he'll pay for it."

He snatched his hat and umbrella and led the way out.

"I don't know when I'll be back," he said to his clerk, adding something in a whisper.

Two hours of breakneck driving over slippery roads, far out into the country, did nothing to improve Weems's disposition.

"I'll tell that nutty near-Napoleon a thing or two," Weems muttered as he stepped out of the car on the driveway in front of an elaborate country estate, and scurried to the door.

The car crawled on around a turn in the drive toward the camouflaged garage.

Through a reception hall with gold-lacquered Chinese furnishings and objets d'art the guide led Weems—still muttering indignantly—into the library.

The late afternoon light sifted in through golden gauze curtains on walls of gold paper and many rows of books reaching the ceiling—all gold-bound and gilt-edged, with the monogram "G. G." stamped over the title on the back of each book.

Goldie, smiling urbanely, was waiting, hands

clasped behind him, at the end of the room in front of the great fireplace.

"Well, here I am," Weems said, abruptly.

"Yes, I was expecting you," Goldie replied, smoothly, adding, to the servant:

"Cigars and sherry, Peters."

Weems, after he had selected a gilt-foil wrapped Havana cigar, stared quizzically at the back of the retreating lackey.

"Looks familiar," he commented shortly.

"You oughta remember," Goldie grunted. "You sprung him. Whitey Peterson, kid."

Weems nodded, lighted his cigar nervously, and said:

"Well, what's the big idea? I'm up to my ears. How good a case you got?"

Goldie laughed softly and puffed his cigarette.

"No case, Gouge," he said. He was silent for a few moments.

"Well, then?" demanded the lawyer, impetuously.

"We're friends, ain't we, Gouge?" he asked, finally.

"Why, sure, Goldie, why not?" demanded his counsel, surprised.

"I want you to make me a promise."

Weems hesitated.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"It's a last promise," Goldie said.

Weems stared at him, slightly apprehensive.

"No bull, Gouge," Goldie repeated, smiling faintly. "I got a hunch."

"Why, sure, Goldie," Weems murmured finally. "If you feel that way; why sure, a man ought to be prepared. What is it, a will I should draw up for you?"

"No, not a will, Gouge," Goldie continued slowly. "Something more personal-like than that. You see, Gouge," he spoke confidentially now, "this place and practically everything I got really belongs to the boys. I always spent plenty. But I got fifty grand tucked away in cash in a safety deposit vault in the old First National."

"Well?" asked Weems, as Goldie drew on his cigarette, twisting it with his fingers.

"It's this fifty grand I'm telling you about," Goldie said:

"What'll I do, distribute it to your relatives?"

"I ain't got no folks livin'," Goldie said. "I got one close personal friend I'm takin' care of by givin' her plenty of rocks, which

squares everything. No, the fifty grand goes to myself."

"Well, how can you use fifty grand after your—after your—your funeral?" Weems laughed apologetically.

"Not after," Goldie interrupted gently, "during."

"I get it; I get it," Weems said.

"I want a coffin—" Goldie began.

"We all do, sooner or later," Weems interrupted with attempted pleasantry, but his face changed when he saw Goldie's seriousness.

"I want a coffin plated all over on the outside with solid eighteen-carat gold," Goldie went on, "with solid gold name plate and handles and some little statues-like on the sides or somep'n about my life——"

"Giving away charity or something like that?" Weems suggested.

"No bunk this time, Gouge," Goldie went on. "Put a couple little machine guns, maybe, on it. No bunk. Then I want gold cloth upholstery inside."

"Why, man," Weems protested, "do you realize that'll cost you better than twenty-five grand?"

Goldie tamped out his cigarette.

"Okay," he said, "only make it so much better for forty grand."

"Man," Weems, almost breathless, managed to protest, "you're nuts. Throwing away forty thousand dollars! I won't do it. I won't be a party to any such insanity."

"I think you'll do it," Goldie murmured. "I don't know whether I ever told you that those affidavits about your selling out in the Blake murder are in a safe deposit box, and a fellow I got off from the chair has the key, just in case your memory goes bad."

"I didn't say nothing," Weems said quickly. "It's your dough."

"Here's the key; then it's all set," Goldie said, clasping Weems's hand in a grip that made the lawyer wince.

"That leaves ten thousand," Weems remembered.

"That all goes for flowers," Goldie ordered. "That should make at least forty, fifty auto loads of flowers."

"How about me?" asked Weems.

"There's a one-grand note in your right-hand coat pocket," Goldie informed his guest.

Weems looked at the note, folded it in his

pocketbook and rubbed his bald head in surprise.

"It's a shame to throw away fifty grand when you won't even know it," Weems sighed. "Humph—ten thousand bucks for flowers you can't even smell."

"Don't forget, old boy, for your own health," Goldie warned, "there'll be friends of mine who'll smell 'em."

"I never forget," Weems said quickly. "If that's all, I'll be beating it back to town. But listen," he said, turning, "as man to man, what put all this in your head, Goldie?"

"Oh, I had a dream, that's all, I just got an idea."

"Well, on the level, Goldie, I'm sorry you feel that way," Weems declared, gripping the other man's hand.

"Okay," Goldie said. "We all get it sooner or later. I got one thing left I want to do. When it's done, I'm set. So long."

The attorney muttered to himself all the way back to his office. Goldie Gorio still sat and drummed with his fingers on the gold-inlaid arm of his chair.

CHAPTER XIX

"You figure Goldie's on the up-'n'-up, eh?"

The man, with his cap over one glass eye, leaned back further in his chair, crossed his feet on the kitchen table, and watched Peters, the footman, attentively.

Peters looked surprised.

"Well, he's always treated me square."

The ex-convict's face was seamed with wrinkles of worry.

"We've been chewing it over down in the hut," the one-eyed one went on. "There's a lot of angles that can stand a lot of explaining."

"For instance?" suggested Peters.

"Well, to go back, there's a lot of queer work about the way the Edgewater Kid was put on the spot."

"Yeah?"

"And it's no laugh the way Goldie's took up with Edgewater's broad, putting practically the whole mob on the hot squat if anything went wrong."

The footman, shaking his head worriedly,

walked out of the kitchen, through the dining room. Passing the door of the music room, with its gilded grand piano, he looked in.

Polack Annie, the faint curves of her boyish figure alluring in a chiffon negligee, was seated at the instrument, as though she had been playing.

Goldie was leaning on the edge of the piano, his hands locked together, staring at her with a breathless intensity.

"Goldie," she said softly, looking with eyes that were tear-filled into his gleaming black ones, "you've been mighty good to me."

She extended her hand and laid it gently upon his clenched ones.

Goldie started.

"Annie," he said, "I've got something to say to you—something mighty important."

"What is it, Goldie?" she asked.

The pupils of his eyes narrowed slightly.

"Annie," he began, falteringly—and his eyes left hers, roamed to a mirror, and saw the reflection of Peters, unmistakably listening.

"Annie," he went on, smoothly, "anything I did, you had comin'."

"Thank you," she said, with a faintly quizzical expression in her eyes.

"I want you to do me a favor, Annie," he said.

"Certainly," she replied, "what is it?"

He held out his hand, and she took it, slipping her arm through his as he led her, unexpectedly, through the service pantry and into the kitchen, on the heels of Peters.

The one-eyed man brought his feet and chair to the floor with a clatter.

"Just came up to borrow some—some—some pepper, boss," he stammered.

"Oh, yeah?" Goldie taunted, with an icy grin, "and why didn't you give it to him, Peters?"

Peters tried unsuccessfully to explain. Goldie stalked to a cupboard, fumbled about, took something down, wrenched at it with another hand, jerked his arm, and the one-eyed man was suddenly coughing and dancing in a cloud of pepper and holding his eye.

"When you get down to the hut, send Monk up," Goldie called after the retreating figure. Peters started apologizing and explaining volubly, but Goldie cut him off, and with Annie he walked back to the library.

"It's the funniest thing," Annie said, "it seems to me every time I turn around in the

last day or so I see one of your friends borrowing pepper, or borrowing a book, or some spoons, or even soap——"

"Or just trouble. I'll stop that," Goldie promised grimly. He was twisting his steel-muscled fingers back and forth over a twenty-dollar gold piece as though he would break it.

Monk followed Peters into the room a few minutes later.

"What's the word, Goldie?" he asked.

"Somethin' up, Monk," he said. "Don't want to spill it yet. Want the whole mob rounded up in the city office."

"But, Goldie," Monk protested, "that's too hot now right after that headquarters trick."

"Nonsense," Goldie retorted fervently. "Who the hell knows the location except our own bunch?"

"Nobody," Monk reluctantly admitted, then added:

"But how about Chimp?"

Goldie laughed heartily.

"Chimp squeal?" he roared. "Be yourself, Monk, be yourself. Goldie's gang don't give in."

When Monk told the news down in the main "hut," he thought for a few minutes he would

have open rebellion on his hands. The iron discipline of the mob told in the end, however, and even those who had complained most bitterly against the foolhardiness that had characterized Goldie's recent acts took their places readily enough in the motor cars.

One by one, four cars purred by the house, down the winding drive and out through the iron gates.

The last car picked up Peters and another servant but deposited Goldie's driver.

"Nix," Goldie countermanded. "You go right along with them. I'll drive myself. I got a reason."

"But Goldie," protested his driver. "It ain't right for you to go nowheres alone."

"You'd think I was a queen bee or somep'n," Goldie exploded. "You get the hell out o' here, will you? I'll take care of myself and all o' you, too! I know what I'm doin'. Scram!"

The abashed chauffeur left—and Goldie and Polack Annie were alone in the great fortressed house, miles from the nearest human being.

Back in his cell, Chimp had both arms

extended through the bars, waving them frantically at the seemingly sympathetic but bewildered and uncomprehending keeper.

Chimp's face was seamed with deep lines; his eyes were bulging, his hair was disheveled, and he was badly in need of a shave.

"Poor fella. Now, just be calm a few minutes; the boys are bringing your shoes now," the keeper admonished.

"That's what you've been tellin' me for years," screamed Chimp, tears running down his tough cheeks, "and, for the love of God, be human an' bring a guy a cigarette he can smoke."

A beggar errand boy came up with a package of cigarettes. Chimp tore them open, then threw them on the floor.

"Cuban!" he screamed. "Oh, my God!"

Still the keeper apologized.

"Here come your shoes," he said.

Chimp, unable to see down the corridor, quivered with excitement. But before the shoes arrived the two familiar detectives arrived to take him up the forty-two steps of red-hot, fine-pointed steel needles.

The man with the shoes arrived simultaneously.

"For the saints' sakes," begged Chimp, weeping unrestrained, "gimme a break. Leave me just put them shoes on."

The two detectives conferred a moment.

"I guess we can wait, Old-Timer," agreed one of them.

Breathing a deep sigh of relief, but weeping all the harder, Chimp sat on his bunk and started to put on his shoes.

"My God," he screamed, "they ain't my shoes. They're three sizes too small."

The keeper started again to apologize profusely.

Chimp cut him off. He was blubbering like a baby.

"For the love of God," he implored, "tell the Captain I'll tell him anything to get out o' here."

The detectives smiled. They helped carry the stocking-footed prisoner over the forty-two steps. He appeared to be dangerously on the verge of collapse.

"He's ready, Cap," they told their superior.

But Chimp had regained a little, though not all, of his self-control.

"I won't rat—I won't squeal," he protested bitterly.

"Ah," agreed the Captain. "I can't blame you, but what I want to know now won't hurt a soul."

"What is it?" and Chimp flopped into a chair.

"All we want to know is where the Gorio mob is hanging out now—their new headquarters," replied the Captain.

Chimp hesitated a moment. He knew the mob was in the country and would be there for some time. To give away the new headquarters wouldn't mean anything—not to would mean more unendurable torture.

"All right, Cap," he said. "But my ol' mother'll turn over in her grave."

That was when he came through. A Gorio gangster, a squealer!

CHAPTER XX

Goldie took one of Annie's delicate hands in both of his hairy huge paws, as they sat together on the deep upholstered couch in front of the living room fireplace. Several logs were crackling merrily and the room was illuminated by the soft red glow of the burning wood.

"You know, Annie," Goldie whispered huskily, "you are the only woman I have ever loved."

Annie appeared startled. Her limpid eyes turned quickly on Goldie and she gently withdrew her hand.

"I—I've heard that line before," she observed cynically, moving away from Goldie.

Goldie rested his elbows on his knees and his head sank into his hands. Annie leaned over and ran her hand through his massive black hair.

"I didn't mean to hurt your feelings," she said, tenderly. "You certainly have been wonderful to me."

Goldie caught her hand and pressed it to his lips. She recoiled again.

"Ain't it about time you went along and met them other fellows?" she asked with a distinctly cool smile.

"I'm not goin', darling," and Goldie leaned over suddenly and kissed her. Annie sprang up and walked slowly away. She stood before the fire and looked at the burning logs.

Goldie reached in his pocket and drew out something. He arose and walked beside her.

"Don't be sore, Kid," he said, standing near her. "I can't help the way I feel—here's a little present for you."

He handed her the object and she listlessly took it.

"A gat?" she exclaimed, holding it at arm's length.

Goldie laughed, a forced, hollow laugh.

"A gat for a gal," he said.

He took the miniature gun from her, a golden object about half the size of an ordinary weapon. He broke open the chamber and showed her a small compartment with powder and a puff. The muzzle concealed a small lipstick and the handle a small mirror on the butt. This opened, too, the end working on little

hinges and inside was a perfume bottle. The little gun was carried by a small gold chain, with a ring on it.

"Gee, that's pretty," Annie said softly. She sighed and walked back to the couch.

"Come on, Babes, let's eat," said Goldie. "I had the cook fix us up a regular supper before he left."

He took her by the arm and led her to the dining room. He switched on the light and then walked out into the kitchen. He served her himself—first the soup and then he brought a bucket of ice in which nestled a bottle of champagne.

"I used to be a waiter," he grinned. The cork came out with a pop and he poured the golden liquid into her gilt-rimmed glass, where small bubbles squirmed up through the stem.

He stood beside her when he had filled his goblet, and said:

"A toast, Babes—you know I got a hunch to-day that Goldie ain't goin' to be with you long. I ordered a forty-t'ousand-dollar gold coffin, with all the trimmin's—flowers and everything. Will you come to my funeral?"

"Don't go on that way, Goldie," begged

Annie, sipping from her glass. "I—I like you too well to like that kind o' talk."

"But my hunches have always been right," insisted Goldie. "I'm a seventh son."

"Then stay clear o' town—you're safe out here," and Annie poked her soup spoon into the plate.

"But what've I got to live for?" said Goldie as he took his seat at the opposite end of the table. "I ain't got no family, no friends. Them guys only kotow to me because I make 'em—because I've got somethin' on everyone of 'em. You know the racket. But if I had a real woman—like you, Babes," and Goldie narrowed his eyes as he peered down the table at Annie, "I'd have somethin' to live for."

"Goldie, don't go into town to-night," begged Annie, not daring to look at him, "not when you feel like that——"

"But I ain't got no reason to stay out here," insisted Goldie.

For a moment both were silent, then Annie looked up warily.

"Well, I'm out here," she said finally.

Without a word Goldie arose and dragging his chair behind him he walked around the

table to where Annie sat. He put the chair down beside her and grabbed up the champagne bottle.

"Let's drink on that, Babes," he prefaced, huskily.

Polack Annie was not keen for alcohol. Once the Edgewater Kid had made her drink several shots of rye when she had a toothache, and she recalled the sensation—a certain pleasant feeling had stolen over her, she had felt a tingling of her nerves. Now she drank because she wanted to forget. She felt that the inevitable was upon her—that she would have to give in to Goldie. He had something on her, just as he had something on all of his mob.

She emptied the glass and held it out to Goldie, who quickly refilled it. She felt her heart beat faster, but she drank slowly.

"Goldie," she said, "I know you'll think I'm raw. But I'd rather you'd stay here with me to-night than to go to town. I'm beginnin' to feel, too, that somethin' might go cockeyed. I owe you that much," in a reconciled tone. "You've been good to me—mighty good."

Goldie did not answer, but sat and looked at her. Then he said:

"Babes, I love you. If you don't care for

me, say so. I don' want no woman what don' want me."

Polack Annie looked him squarely in his blazing eyes. She knew. She saw there why he had gone beyond the limits for her, why he had cleared the house, why he had endangered a score of lives and almost wrecked a metropolis—for this moment: for the answer that was to come from her lips—now.

The Edgewater Kid, the only man she had ever loved or could ever love, was dead. If anyone would avenge him, Goldie would. Only that he had to save her, he would have avenged him long ago. Her mouth trembled.

"Goldie, dear," she said, in notes like the sob of a cello, "I—I'm fond o' you. My heart still hurts so—well, I couldn't say 'I love you' to no man—not yet. But if that'll do—" and she stretched out two quivering hands at the length of two shivering arms.

With a snort Goldie leaped to his feet. In his charge he kicked over the champagne bucket. The water slushed out upon the priceless carpet where its puddles fizzed with the wine.

"You—don' want me to go to town tonight!" he breathed.

She shook her red head.

He seized her and kissed her full on her lips. He held her long.

"No, Goldie," she whispered when he paused for breath. "I wouldn' let you take no such long chances."

Outside the whine of a police dog could be heard.

"I'll stay," he said. "I'll stay—to-night—with you, Babes . . . an' then Goldie's ready."

"Ready?"

"For that gold coffin."

He embraced her like a gorilla.

"Don't," she gasped. "Goldie—don't!"

"Don't—what?"

'Don't—talk like that."

"Oh . . . I thought——"

"No—no. I told you."

"I know—tell me again—tell me some more——"

"What more could I tell you, man?"

"Tell me—look at me—tell me——"

His Latin eyes were flaming. His hair was rumpled where she had run her fingers through it. His mouth was twitching.

"Tell me!" he hoarsed.

"I'm—I'm yours—what more could I tell you, Goldie?"

The gangster picked her up as though she weighed nothing. And as he carried her from the room, Polack Annie, the unwed widow, was limp and unresisting.

The police dog had ceased his whining. All was still save a low fizzing of a small pool of champagne that had escaped contamination of the water—the melted ice.

CHAPTER XXI

They pulled up to the door of the hang-out, car by car. The entrance was in an alley. Across it was the tall, unbroken rear of a gray warehouse. No one could look directly at the door that led into the headquarters of the Gorio gang. It was neither high nor wide enough to let in a car. But when it was opened and some catches were released within, the panels telescoped up and out and made a complete garage opening.

The four cars were neatly backed and ranged against the side wall. The mob found chairs around the flat-top desk, which was Goldie's, and at which no one sat even when he wasn't there. Thirteen of them formed about, smoking and spitting. Cranky, the ex-blacksmith, by nature a killer of joy as he was a killer of men, took census and pointed out the jinx count-up.

"Goldie'll be along now," said Monk, "and he'll run us up to fourteen."

"Why do you s'pose he sent me on ahead?" asked Ray, the chauffeur.

"Don' be simple," grinned One-Eye. "The answer's one word—Annie. He all but knocked me an' Whitey off becus' he thought we was moochin' on he an' her in the big shack. Soon's he learns her how to be a lady he'll be here—an' no sooner."

"This is one hell of a time to get tangled up in a skirt," grouched Clammy Withers.

"Well, Nero, who was no small Wap, neither, fiddled aroun' while Rome was burnin'," chuckled Monk, whose admiration for his chief's bravado and foolhardiness transcended even considerations of his own liberty and safety.

"Yeah—I guess he prob'ly done it to show some redhead a big night," growled Cranky.

They talked along for hours. Once Ray had the temerity to phone the country house. No answer.

"He's out," said he.

"Or he's in," chuckled Monk. "Out or in, he pays no 'tention to bells, bulls nor nothin' else 'less he feels like it . . . I guess he's on the way here, at that. It's daylight."

"Here he comes now," exclaimed Moon-

Face, as a buzzing in the amplifier rigged to both ends of the alley as a tip-off to any approach by foot, horse or engine, gave warning.

"No chance," snapped Ray. "If Goldie's car grumbled like that he'd shoot me in the ankle . . . I'll give a look."

The chauffeur put his eye to the lens of a swiveled periscope that swept the whole alley. He turned suddenly:

"Bulls!" he whispered. "Two harness cops."

There was a distinct sound of braking to a halt at the door. The men came to their feet. Chip Hummell drew his rod.

"Nix," warned Monk, who, in the absence of Goldie, assumed the lead. "Two flatfoots wouldn't brace this joint lookin' for trouble. Anyway, not harness men—they'd send plainclothers from homicide detail. Lemme handle 'em . . . they're harmless."

There was knocking at the door. Monk opened it. He saw a small department car, such as is used for patrol service. At the wheel sat a sergeant, wearing traffic insignia. Standing at the threshold was a uniformed lieutenant. Both were strangers to Goldie's crew.

The lieutenant ran his eyes over the assemblage.

"Where's Goldie?" he asked in a confidential tone.

"Goldie? Goldie who?" returned Monk, with a dead pan.

"Come out of it," protested the officer. "I'm Lootenant Minnehan—I got a message for Goldie from the cap'n—where is he?"

"I ain't tellin' nobody nothin'. What's the message?"

"Well, it's this . . . the cap'n says for the lot o' you to beat it an' beat it fast . . . the chief's wise to the hang-out—Chimp went rat —the homicide squad's on the way, an'——"

"To the cars," cried Monk.

Like firemen at the alarm, the thirteen sprang for their places. Their backs were to the door. Ray's foot was on the starter. A sudden roar in the amplifier made them hesitate. Simultaneously from both ends of the short alley two dark touring cars bearing police plates front and back pulled up at the door. A dozen or more men poured forth. In the lead ran a giant carrying a Lewis machine gun strapped to his forearm. Behind him swarmed

others with sawed-off shotguns, Luegers, army automatics. The uniformed men drew regulation Colts.

"Line up against that wall, hands up, backs turned," cried the big man with the typewriter. "We're homicide men. You all stand for a frisk."

It had all come about so quickly that the intensive mechanical and mental precautions of the perfectly equipped fortress and the hair-trigger trained gangsters had failed to function. Whitey Peters, as he let one foot out of a car, reached furtively under his coat. A bullet from the sergeant's gun got him through the brain and he went down, face first. The typewriter was waving back and forth with deadly suggestiveness.

One by one they shambled and stumbled backward, their eyes registering hurt surprise. The machine gunner advanced.

"Where's Goldie?" he demanded.

Monk scrutinized him piercingly.

"Say, whoever the hell you are, who the hell do you think I am?" he clicked. "You ain' no dicks—now cut out the third degree and come clean. What is all this hokum?"

One-Eye, who had been searching the big

man's face, suddenly let loose an oath: ". . . it's Gleason—Sec'tary Gleason!"

A shot of electric astonishment ran through Goldie's men. The dozen armed thugs were coming at them now. The mongrel assortment of weapons, alone, proclaimed them pirates.

The "frisk" took but a few seconds. The gang was stripped of its firearms, which were flung into a corner. The door was shut, and they stood, hands in air and faces to the wall.

"Turn around, you," ordered Gleason, poking Monk in the back.

Monk faced him, his mouth hard set, his eyes boring into the iron eyes of Gleason, the butcher.

"Which one o' youse yeggs knocked off Kinky King?" demanded Gleason.

"None of us," answered Monk, slowly. "Not that it gets us a thing now."

"You're a liar," boomed Gleason. "We made a fair bargain, up an' up, an' your mob double-crossed."

"Whose mob did? Who got the Edgewater Kid? Which one o' you?"

"None of us. We was more s'prised than what youse was."

"Okay, then—it's a mistake all aroun'—put

up that typewriter an' we'll all call it a new deal—I can talk for Goldie——"

Gleason had never been known to laugh. But Pinkey Shapiro, who had a sense of humor, giggled out loud. Gleason didn't turn, but seemed to give him a nasty look with the back of his ears. Pinkey shut off his mirth.

"The only deal I'll make is this," barked Gleason. "Turn up the guy what plugged Kinky . . . then pick up that phone an' call Goldie an' tell him to come here right away . . . you know how to get him . . . then, when I croak him an' whoever clipped Kinky, we'll call it a day."

"Gleason," said Monk, "if you wait for me or any of us to put Goldie on the spot for you, you'll wait'll your teeth fall out. An' I swear I don' know who got King."

"Turn aroun', youse guys—all o' youse," called Gleason. He looked at their faces, one by one. Some were ghastly blue. Cranky's knees were knocking. The tears were trickling down Clammy's cheeks.

"The man who gets Goldie Gorio on that phone walks out o' that door with his life," he announced. "Come on, now—some o' youse got women an' kids—youse all know where

Goldie is—we'll get him sooner or later, anyways, so you can save your own life an' you can't save his by dyin' for him. . . . Well, I'm waitin'——"

Cranky was trying to wet his dry lips with his dry tongue. His shoulders started forward. His left foot scraped ahead of his right. He forced back his head and began a step.

Monk, half his size, with a sudden upward swing of his foot, kicked the traitor viciously in the stomach. Cranky doubled up with pain and fell in a faint. Fats Ryan jumped in with a grunt and struck Monk in the mouth with his fist. Monk staggered against the wall and braced himself with his hands. He spat out a tooth. A rivulet of blood seeped down his chin and onto his shirt.

"I offered youse guys fair," growled Gleason. "Now I'll give youse till the count o' ten. My offer stands that long. After that —it'll be too late—an' too bad . . . one . . . two . . . three . . . four . . ." they stood there, all but the prostrate two, one dead and one unconscious, and their features twitched, but they stood there . . . "five . . . six . . . seven . . ." and still not a sign of the white liver from these murderers about to

be murdered . . . eight . . . nine . . ."

It was Monk!

"I—I'll phone," he cried.

Gleason almost dropped his machine gun. The Gorio mob, for the instant forgetting what hung above with just one second between them and God, turned toward their leader, their spokesman in this tragic crisis—turned in astonished curiosity.

"You? You'll phone?" incredulously yelled Gleason. "You?"

Monk marched out of the line. Everyone stood rigid. A dozen guns were trained on him by the time he had traversed half the room. Gleason stood with his artillery covering the others. Monk strode on. He reached the desk and picked up the telephone. Not another sound broke the thick stillness as he called a number. Every man in the room made a mental note of it. It was so quiet that the operator's repeat boomed . . . then the burr of a bell somewhere on the other end . . . then a click and a voice—a woman's—then Monk:

"It's me, honey—Monk—good-by, mamma—good-by, darling—they got me an' the rest o' the boys—all but Goldie—phone Goldie—tell him to lam—tell him to stay away from——"

"Get that crazy rat!" bellowed Gleason.

Four men fell on Monk and tore the instrument from his hand. They dragged him back into the line and threw him against the wall. He was cuts and bruises and blood all over now.

"So," hissed Gleason, "a double-dealin' fink to the last. You ain't got a decent blowoff comin' to you. But I'll give youse—all o' youse—time to pray."

"Go to hell," answered Moon-Face. "Who wants favors from you? Shoot!"

"Shut up, you left-handed bohunk," snarled Gleason. "Down on your knees an' pray—pray forgiveness for all your dirty, rotten sins . . . for I don' want the sin on my head o' killin' youse all wit'out givin' youse a chance to pray—to call on high for mercy—yeh, call on high for mercy . . . youse sure won' get no more of it here!"

CHAPTER XXII

ELEVEN game men stood against the wall of Goldie Gorio's camouflaged stable. All yellow killers, they could die white, these polyglot scums of the slums. The laws of all decent humankind they held in hot hatred and cold contempt. But they worshiped their own distorted traditions of perverted honor.

Facing them, their executioners were of the same breed.

All alike glanced with loathing at Cranky, the would-be traitor, who still lay huddled on the cement floor, doomed to end that way, an ignominious heap. Monk, the blood dripping from his battered mouth, spat at the gang's disgrace.

"Him an' Chimp!" he undertoned sidewise to One-Eye. "He would o' turned up Goldie, an' Chimp ratted on us all—he tipped off the hang-out—if I could live long enough to——"

"Shut up," snapped Gleason. "I give youse time to pray, not to bellyache. Get to it. This typewriter's heavy an' I'm gettin' fed up."

Monk smiled with a sneer. Then he rubbed his right hand on the leg of his trousers and stuck it out to One-Eye, at his side.

"So long," he said. "I guess we better shake hands oncet aroun'—Gleason won't mind."

Solemnly they all gripped moist, unsteady hands, each with the other.

"We're on the spot, fellers," said Monk. "We're gettin' it for what none of us done. We can all go to the gates o' wherever we're goin, wit' a dyin' oath that none of us had a hand in croakin' Kinky King . . . but Gleason says we got to go—an' he's handlin' the typewriter this trip . . . well, in this racket we all got to go . . . ev'ryone o' them hoodlums there'll get his—an' maybe they won' even get time to pray . . . we got a break—we got time to pray . . . let's pray!"

One by one they dropped to their knees. Some clasped their hands together, others cupped hands over their eyes. All muttered earnestly. Ray, the chauffeur, intoned aloud the only prayer that he knew—his babyhood, "Now I lay me——"

Several of the executioners took off their hats, and all looked nervous and touched—

touched not with sympathy or remorse, but moved by the presence of men talking to God —to God whom they would soon look in the face.

Monk was down on one knee. He shaded his bloody and battered countenance with his right hand. He mumbled monosyllables.

The scene grew interminable to the armed murderers, who stood in disorderly formation, making an irregular semicircle behind Gleason, who was at the fore, not letting the angle of his machine gun drop even during the last pleas to heaven.

They shifted feet, wiped their foreheads and squirmed their shoulders.

Monk broke the tensity of the situation.

With a profound inhalation that could be nothing but "Amen," he lifted his face, dragged up the foot of the leg on which he knelt and stood erect.

He fumbled in a pocket and brought out a cigarette. In another he found a match. He lit up, filliped the match half the length of the room. He sucked at his smoke spasmodically and belched out clouds. His jumpy eyes peppered Gleason and the murder mob behind him.

"So youse had to do it in p'lice cars and

p'lice harness," he sneered. "Workin' wit' the coppers! I hope youse all got the same square deal youse give us . . . I'm ready."

One by one the Gorios were rising.

Chip Hummell was the last still on his knees. He was praying frantically.

"Come on," called Monk. "If what you said a'ready ain't enough, no matter what you say won' get you nothin' . . . come on—we got to go—let's go."

Hummell finished out his invocation. As he came to his feet he opened his eyes and seemed self-conscious because everyone was looking at him, as though he had been caught, alone, in some boyish or boobish deed. He braced his shoulders and flattened his broad back against the bricks.

"All right," he said throatily. "I—I won' hold up the works."

"Secretary" Gleason, conceived in gin, born in sin, nursed on blood, was tough. He had plotted the death of many a man before and carried it out with a serious concentration that had no room for shame or sentiment. It was his business. But never before had he called on himself for anything quite as grim and grisly as this piece of business.

It was one thing to take a sucker or a traitor for a ride, press the nozzle of an automatic into his belly and pull a little jigger . . . it was another to waylay an auto, cut in on it, poke the sprayer of a typewriter through a flapping side curtain and let go the fusillade as his car tore on in high. But this——

It had taken so long, it had been so deliberate—and these damned rats acted so like men! He couldn't help hating them, but he couldn't help admiring them. No matter how badly a man needs killing, it is disconcerting if he doesn't collaborate—coöperate. He might at least show yellow so that there would be some pleasure in plugging him. He might whine and make a guy sore so that he would shoot in anger. But this mob!

They weren't even impudent, not even defiant. They didn't challenge death, in which event it would have been the brave thing to call their bluff. These Gorios knew how to die; it might have been expected that they would know only how to get killed.

Gleason cleared his throat with a hack.

"Youse guys can turn to the wall or take it the way youse are," he said.

There was no answer. There was no move.

Gleason stepped a few feet to one side and jabbed Cranky with his foot.

"Hey—quit your stallin'—stand up an' go to hell like a man—hear me?"

There was no answer. There was no move.

Gleason was glad. It was something to get sore about. He kicked Cranky lustily.

"He's out," said Monk. "Let him die in peace."

"He'll die in pieces, the yeller skunk," spat Gleason. "Well—any o' youse wanna say anything before I—before the blow-off?"

"For the Lord's sake, let 'er go," shrilled Moon-Face. "What is this here game?"

"Don' get impatient," snarled Gleason. "You won' die of old age. You're a pretty breezy bird for a spot like this, you are. Hear me?" he snapped.

He was trying to work himself up to a state of anger. He wanted to be dared—he wanted someone to say something out of turn—he wanted to fly into a temper so that it would start while he was hot; he knew that after it started the momentum would carry him through . . . for this was to be a slaughter, a

massacre, and his heart was in it—but his hands just wouldn't get going.

No one said a word now.

The telephone rang!

Everyone jumped. Gleason motioned one of his men to answer. It was a blind number, of course, and no outsider would call it—no tradesman—no——

It was for Ray. The man at the phone held his hand over the transmitter and said so—a woman calling.

"My wife!" gasped Ray, and started. Gleason shoved the nose of his machine gun into the gangster chauffeur's breast.

"Stand back," he cried.

"For God's sake," pleaded Ray. "It's my wife—we've on'y been married six weeks—what harm can it do?—for God's sake, man—I won' say nothin'—jus' good-by—lemme tell 'er good-by—for God's sake——"

"Stand back," screamed Gleason . . . "stand back or I'll——"

Ray ducked under the gun and made a desperate sprint toward the telephone. Two gats snorted. He fell in his tracks, clutched at his bowels, turned over and lay still.

"Hang up that phone," shouted Gleason, and he turned.

"Now, youse hoodlums," he barked, through gritted teeth, "that's all I'm gonna take from any o' youse. It's fight youse want, is it, huh? Get back there—against that wall—an' no more monkeyin'—hear me?"

Monk dropped his cigarette and crushed it slowly with his foot.

"I ain't squawkin'," he said, with a voice that cracked and a smile that agonized. "Let 'er go, I hope your lousy soul roasts in Hell eternal t'gether with that other buzzard, Kinky King."

Gleason's face went black.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" he cried, hysterically. "Well—just for that——"

He swung the nozzle of his machine gun to the far left, braced himself for the stance, shut his eyes one second, and——

Like the roar of a thousand cannon in the hollow enclosed barn the reverberations of the discharges, staccato and thunderous, were punctured with the dull clumps of lead striking soft bodies and the sharp snap of bullets striking hard bricks.

They all went down before that first quadrant of fire.

Some collapsed where they stood. Others slumped forward.

Gleason lowered his death sprayer and sprinkled them with it on the floor. His killer lust was riding high. Cranky got it and never knew it. Those of the others who still writhed or wriggled were shocked with each new impact into one more weak recoil, one more resistless little quiver. Blood everywhere.

It was all done. All over. There they lay, thirteen of them, ten in a heap.

Gleason let the nose of his gun swing down toward the floor.

"Well, that's that," he said, waving away the smoke with his other hand. "Youse eight beat it west—youse six an' me an' Ratface go east. We meet at nine o'clock t'-night—hear me?"

Pinky Shapiro rubbed his hands.

"This territory'll be a gold mine," he cackled.

CHAPTER XXIII

Polack Annie, wide awake, lay in the fantastically huge bed and stared hard-eyed through the open leaded window at a branch that swept by, the leaves crimson and russet in the bright autumn morning sun.

A burst of violent whistling cut through the bathroom door and the two hard, vertical lines between her eyebrows deepened. She wished Goldie wouldn't whistle, or, if he had to whistle, that he would try to keep on the key. And that he'd whistle something other than the Maine Stein Song.

It was harder to take than she had thought it would be. The Edgewater Kid had changed everything for her. Now she knew she would live always in misery. At least she had paid off. That helped some. She had paid off Kinky King with six bullets, and Goldie Gorio——

The bathroom door opened and Goldie sauntered out, still whistling. He was grinning merrily, his face a Santa Claus effect with thick

white shaving cream. His black, oily hair was wet, curled and rumpled. The gold buckles on his suspenders gleamed. His gorilla-like arms were covered with thick, curling hairs and a black thatch peeped forth at his chest.

"Well, Annie, Babes, how you feel this beautiful morning, eh?" he grinned, waving his solid-gold handled razor in a typical Latin gesture, and falling into Latin mannerisms of speech, as he often did when he felt jubilant.

She forced a synthetic smile.

He came toward her, doing a grotesque dance step out of sheer good spirits, and patted her heavily with his free hand. It was still dripping wet.

"You feel better after you rest," he rumbled reassuringly. "How you like your Goldie, oke? You rest awhile and I'll go an' bring you some breakfast. I'm going to treat you right, Annie, you can bank on that, Babes. You're mine now, an' ev'ything what's mine is covered with gold."

He gave her a final pat, commenced whistling and swaggered back into the bathroom, rubbing the lather into his whiskers, closing the door behind him.

Annie stared again at the blood-red leaves in the sun.

A bird was singing. Was it a robin? She couldn't tell a robin from a hawk. She wished Goldie would stop whistling so she could hear the robin. Why did she feel so strangely, bitterly hostile toward Goldie?

"After all," Annie mused, "I'm no angel. I been through plenty tougher than this. I could be a lot worser off. It's a swell layout. He seems to of fell for me hard, and he's a big shot."

But she could not drive off the gooseflesh. Some hidden feeling, some strange, unanalyzed urge, kept whispering to her insistently that she must hate and distrust Goldie.

She glanced around the luxurious room, its Bourbon splendor marred only by a few scattered possessions of Goldie. His tan brogues where he had kicked them off, a shirt tossed into a corner, his vest and coat hung over the back of the little chair before her dressing table, with the two legendary golden automatics which Goldie carried, in their holsters lying on the seat of the chair.

She tried to relax. Goldie whistled on end-

lessly. The bird had stopped singing and was chattering as though scolding.

She stared at the window, but snapped out of her inertia into sudden, frozen terror when a hand—a dirty hand splotched with dry blood that showed nearly black in the bright sunlight—reached over the edge of the window sill and clung to it.

Annie stifled her scream. In a second she gauged her possibilities of rushing to the bathroom or leaping across the chamber to Goldie's glittering pistols.

In that split second she decided her best chance of warning Goldie would be to engage the intruder in conversation. If she screamed, Goldie would rush out unarmed to face bullets. If he heard her talking, he would stand still in surprise for a moment, and in that moment would realize danger threatened. She waited, taut.

Tousled, blood-clotted hair followed the hand. And then a face—the most awful face she had ever seen. One cheek was torn and covered with thick, plastered gore. The eyes were protruding fireballs. The rest of the face and the clothes as they appeared above the sill were blood-streaked and clotted.

"Monk!"

She tried to say it in a loud voice; to say more; to ask him why he looked that way and why he had entered the house by a rose trellis. But her throat was paralyzed and the word was a parched whisper. Her eyes, too, protruded.

Monk stared grimly, terribly at her, as he painfully swung a leg over the sill. Goldie was still whistling in the bathroom.

Monk, swaying on his feet in the room, signaled silence with a finger on his lips.

Something in his terrifying, devilish look at the closed bathroom door made her obey him. She walked slowly across the room toward him, still and staring.

Monk's left hand, also covered with blood, hung limp. He fumbled in a pocket with his right hand and slowly drew out a revolver. He was swaying so that it seemed he would collapse any moment.

"They punched my ticket," Monk whispered, his voice hissing and crackling like waxed paper, "and I'm just about to my station, but I'm gonna take one bad Guinea along."

He jerked his revolver in the direction of the whistling.

Annie felt she had to spar for time. Now that the moment had come, she was willing to sacrifice herself, if need be, for Goldie, because Goldie was the Edgewater Kid's God, and the memory of the Kid was hers.

Then Monk continued, bitterly:

"He put us all on the spot—all of us—all gone—wiped out—all but me."

Annie stared, wide-eyed. The man couldn't be joking. Delirious! That was it.

"He sent us there an' he stayed here. Gleason an' the cops clipped us. I wouldn' rat. I wouldn' tell 'em where he was. I wouldn' let that mob knock him off. I'll do that meself—that's what I prayed for—I prayed to be spared for that—for this——"

Annie heard, dumfounded.

"Oh, no," she breathed. "Not Goldie . . . you're out o' your head . . . here, lay down—lemme get you a slug o' rye——"

"Slug hell! I'm copesettee. I drove all the way here—like I am—an' on my nerve. I'll last long enough to settle up for the boys——"

Annie sprang between him and the door. She held out her arms to bar his way.

"Get the hell out o' here," he shrilled, "or I'll drill you. You're standin' between me an'

your wors' enemy, you dumb dame . . . an' you knocked off Kinky King!"

"Yeah—I did!"

"What a laugh! For killin' the Kid! Well, Kinky had nothin' to do wit' it . . . there's the Big Boy—in there—" and he pointed with his gun.

"Wh-what! Goldie? He—my Kid?"

"Sure. Who d'you think worked that typewriter? Chimp. Who put him up to it? Goldie. Why? Becus' the greasy rat had a yen for you. It cost many a good guy's life when he flopped for your red hair an' your——

She stood, glassy-eyed, petrified, swaying.

"On the soul o' me mother, I swear it! I wouldn' o' never peached. Goldie said the Kid was crossin' the mob an' had to go . . . now I know who was crossin'—an' now I'm gonna—get out o' my way——"

In a daze, Polack Annie side-stepped.

"I'll make it," gurgled Monk. "I'll square the Kid—an'——"

Annie turned to glare with volcanic hate at the door behind which was the man who had widowed her, had defrauded her, had betrayed her. She realized with a sudden shock like an

icy shower that the whistling had ceased. The door was half open. Goldie stood there, still with lather on one side of his face. He was grinning. But his eyes were hard and bitter. He laughed. It was forced, but it was loud.

Monk recoiled, pulled himself forward with a spasmodic effort, then sank to his knees from weakness. Slowly, painfully, he raised his weapon. It seemed many minutes to Annie. She was frozen stiff.

Goldie's arm suddenly whisked. A gold and silver streak flashed across the room. The revolver thumped on the carpet. Monk's wrist fell limp and lifeless. A thin streak of blood oozed down it. Goldie's razor lay beside the revolver. Goldie strode toward the dying man, whose eyes were welled with tears and whose shot body rocked. Still Annie couldn't move.

Goldie's gorilla arms lifted the inert Monk. He held him aloft and out. Goldie was whistling! He twined his fingers around Monk's throat, around the spent man's slender windpipe. Goldie shook him. Long shakes, ending with jerks. Each time Monk's gory head popped back and forth. The fifth time. A crack like the thin, high snap of a blacksnake whip. Monk's body sagged. Goldie looked

down at it a moment. Then he flung it into a corner.

Annie still stood riveted. Horror possessed her. Panic couldn't move her. Goldie turned toward her—and bowed!

"You—said something?" he asked, in supreme mock gallantry.

Goldie laughed!

CHAPTER XXIV

"So," SMIRKED Goldie, "Monk—my most faithful boy—coughed up the works, eh? Gangster tells all! It's gettin' to be a fine racket—Chimp squeals to the cops, Monk squeals to my sweetie an' comes gattin' for me—an' my dumb mob lets a fumble-fingered swill-box skimmer like Gleason knock 'em off . . . well, looks like Goldie's got to start all over again an' get himself a new bunch an' a new woman, eh?"

Annie listened with a shudder.

"Did you—was what he said—" she turned toward the lifeless remains of Monk, and closed her eyes.

"Ree-dic'lous," answered Goldie, with an exaggerated gesture. "I loved the Kid. I loved him so much, I wanted to p'tect him—his honor! I didn' trust *you*—see?"

She shook her head. She didn't.

"Well, I do. I knew you'd been Kinky King's moll. I figgered when the Kid was out —h'm—maybe Kinky, he comes in. So I have

Chimp plant a typewriter across the street to clip Kinky if he comes . . . well, Chimp made a mistake—could I help that?"

And he raised his hands in an arc of innocent despair, typical of his race.

Annie bit her lip.

"So you—you thought I wasn' on the level with the Kid?" she choked out.

"I didn't think so, exac'ly—I on'y thought in case of——"

"But I played up-an'-up with you. I jus' saved your life!"

"Yeah—I heard you—thanks. If I was sure it was for *me* you was stallin'——"

"For who else?" demanded Annie. "For God's sake, Goldie—for who else? For who an' for what? After what's been between us? I couldn' save the Kid, so I got the rat what I thought got him. I could save you, an' I took a chance with my life an' stood up before that rod, an' Monk crazy as hell an' too bleary to know what was what. Why?"

"You—you mean this?" cried Goldie, now in sincere earnest and gazing eagerly, tremblingly at the vehement woman.

"Yes—and a whole lot more. I'm a one-man girl. Luck hasn't been with me often. I never

could hold my man long. But as long as I held him he held me. Goldie . . .'' She came toward him, her slender arms outstretched. ''Goldie—take me in your arms—kiss me—tell me that you love me—I—I love you!''

Her cheek was against his, where the lather was drying. His massive bosom heaved with pride, with triumph. Never before had she confessed that she loved him. She had yielded all but that.

''Babes,'' he breathed, when his hold relaxed, ''lemme go. I shave—quick. You pack—quick. We lam—quick. I never think Goldie Gorio could run away from anybody, from anything. My gang shot to hell, the cops crossin' me, Chimp prob'ly tippin' off this hide-away—no! I wouldn't run—not from the whole army . . . but now it's diff'rent. For you! With you! My racket is washed up. We go—far away—to Italy—I got forty, fifty grand—I know where to lay my hands on it—I gave it to—to a man—to buy me somethin' with it—that I don' need now—come on—I shave—you pack——''

He strode swiftly toward the bathroom. His off-key whistle sprang to his blood-red lips.

He turned, and without skipping a note, he

tossed her a kiss with his upturned palm.

The whistle died. One hollow after-tone, like a gasp, followed it. And all was still. The hand in air fell as though the shoulder were a ball-bearing swivel. The big, dark eyes of the gangster terror bulged.

Polack Annie stood with her back to the wall. In each hand she held one of Gorio's gleaming glittering gold automatics. They were pointed at him.

"You murderin' gorilla," she said, and her voice was amazingly calm and steady, "this is the pay-off . . . for the Kid an' the mob an' poor ol' Monk an' even that pickled rat, Kinky King—an' for *me!*"

He was collected now. He was thinking fast. He was measuring the distance to the bathroom door—and to her—and at the same time considering parley, palaver, strategy, force, surprise——

"Stand where you are, Goldie," she commanded. "Nothin's goin' to save you. I'm goin' to croak you first. Then I'll get Chimp if it takes me all my life. You didn't know the kind of redhead you went after over a whole lot o' good men's dead bodies."

She was looking at him through the two sci-

entific sights of his own perfect guns. Her hands were as brave as her talk, and as unwavering. The hammers were set at "attention." Polack Annie had handled just such babies before.

Goldie wet his voluptuous lips, now greenish. He was about to say something. He caught himself. A sickly but definite grin spread over his half-shaven face.

"All right," he said firmly, though there was no moisture in his voice. "Go 'head . . . I didn' dream that Goldie Gorio, after all he went through, would be knocked off by a broad —but if that's in the cards—deal!"

His chest was pushed forward. His hands were at his side.

"Do you—want to pray?"

"What's that your business? I didn' give the Kid time to pray . . . if I could get my hands aroun' your dirty white neck, I wouldn' give you time, neither. . . . Let's go!"

What was that? A loud crashing against some resisting obstacle. The house was trembling. Blow after blow—pounding.

Goldie cocked his sensitive ears.

"The cops!" he hoarsed. "Or Gleason's mob . . . slip me them gats . . . we'll give 'em

a run—gimme my gats, woman—I tell you——"

He started impulsively, blindly at her.

Annie's muscles tightened.

The room rocked and roared with pulsating explosions.

Goldie stopped, staggered, and folded up. His animal body wilted to the stained carpet as though his clothes had nothing in them.

The door was flung open. The Chief of Police crossed the threshold, then stood with one foot advanced, stopped by the picture. Annie's hands were coming slowly downward. First one and then the other of the shining, smoking automatics dropped of their own weight and bounced on the resilient covering of the floor.

"Well, I'll be damned!" cried the Chief.

"You—you got me c-cold this time," stuttered Annie weakly.

"Got you? Yes, baby—I got you . . . beat it—get *me?*"

"Wh—what?"

"Lam—scram—good work . . . I'm sorry, Goldie resisted arrest and I had to plug him with his own cannons, but—in the line of duty——"

"How? Who?"

"Me . . . Chimp coughed up the location, I came here in person to arrest Goldie. I surprised him. He came at me. I grabbed his own gold gats and—well, there he is. . . . Annie, take the air."

"You—you don't want me?"

"Oh! That's another matter. When all this blows by—give a guy a buzz on the phone," and the Chief winked.

"I mean the Kinky King business——"

"King? Kinky King? Whatever did become of him? Oh, yes. He was shot with a lipstick or something, wasn't he?"

"He was shot with a gold-plated .44," said Polack Annie, "and I fired the shot. It was all a mistake. I found out since, but——"

"Come, come—how could shooting Kinky King be a mistake?"

"He didn' get the Edgewater Kid."

"So Chimp tells me. When that baby got spilling, he spilled the works—he just went squeal drunk. He got the Kid . . . hey! What's this?"

The Chief crossed the room and with his heavy-soled foot he turned over the lifeless lump that had been Monk.

"Monk! I thought he was—he was supposed to be——"

"He got away with his life and crawled here to croak Goldie. But Goldie strangled him first. It was him told me who got the Kid."

"Oh—did he? Well, who did get the Kid?"

"Chimp."

"Chimp—and him—Monk! He'd have died for Goldie—and did . . . and so did Chimp, if I forgot to tell you. When he woke up this morning and heard his mob was massacred, and he had that confession hang-over, he took the Dutch route—the CKX—hung himself in his cell by his suspenders. There was only one of the gang left—I came after him, but you beat me to it—you beat me to it . . . now beat it!"

"Wh-where shall I go? Where can I go?"

"Listen, sister, that's your problem. I don't direct traffic. Go anywhere you like—but go! You complicate matters . . . the department needs some Page 1 copy, and you in no part of it this time. So grab your little tin hat and breeze."

"Thanks," sighed Polack Annie.

"Blow! Jump the reservation. I'm getting sore."

"Okay, Chief—I'm on my way," and she started for the door. She stopped and turned. "Oh, by the way—I can't get far—I haven't got a dime—not even carfare to town——"

The Chief searched his pockets. He brought up two nickels and four pennies. He scratched his head in embarrassment. Suddenly his eyes lighted up and a smile broadened over his ample mouth. He reached his thumb and one finger down into the little pocket under the right-hand side of his belt. They came up clutching something. He pushed it into Polack Annie's palm.

"Here," he said, "and good luck to you."

Past the door she looked to see.

It was a twenty-dollar gold piece!

THE END

UNDERWORLD GLOSSARY

This appendix is compiled to include words and phrases used in my three latest books, "Gangster Girl," "Put on the Spot" and "The Big House," taking in the current argot of thieves, gangsters, racketeers, and convicts.

The abbreviations mean: (n.) noun; (v.) verb; (adj.) adjective; (var.) variant; (exc.) exclamation.

Ace (n.) $1. (Var.: berry, buck, caser.)
Ace of Spades (n.) A widow.
Airdale (n.) A faithful pal or associate.
All wet—Entirely wrong.
Angel (n.) A sucker who finances ventures for others, principally one who backs shows and cabarets.
Ankle (v.) To walk.
Ants in the Socks (adj.) Designating a person of energy and pep.

Badger (n.) The badger game is one of the oldest and the most cowardly of all swindles. It is operated through a woman who decoys a man into a spot where her confederate can catch them in a compromising position and, claiming to be her husband, shake the victim down for all the traffic will bear, then and there and often thereafter.
Bad News (n.) A bill or a restaurant check.
Bang Off (v.) To shoot.
Baptized Booze (n.) Cut liquor.
Beezer (n.) Nose.
Begeezes (adj.) High and mighty. (A gangster might speak of a "begeezes copper," meaning one arrogant and hard to approach. Probably a perversion of "By Jesus.")
Benny (n.) Overcoat.
Big Noise (n.) Anyone important.
Big Shot (n.) The head of a gang. (Now more generally applied to anyone who is of high standing and power.)
Bit by a Fox Wised Up.
Blessed (adj.) A crook reformed.
Blind (adj.) Date with unknown person, or any venture "in the dark."
Blister (n.) An old or ugly woman. (Var.: Bat.)
Blowoff (n.) The end.

Boloney (n.) Perversion of "bologna," meaning anything preposterous, incredible, unreasonable.
Book (v.) To have one's name entered at a police station on the "blotter," in which event the prisoner is in position to get out on bail. (Also a life sentence or anything meaning the limit—as in draw poker 5 cards, called "the book" is all one can draw.)
Booster (n.) Shoplifter. (Var.: Derrick.)
Boon with two strikes on Him—Physically or mentally undergrade.
Buzz (v.) To question and cross-question. (Also to telephone to.)
Bottle it (exc.) Shut up!
Bouncer (n.) A bad check that comes back.
Box (n.) Safe.
Bozo (n.) Tramp, bum, panhandler, any person of low standing.
Bracelets (n.) Handcuffs.
Break (n.) Act of destiny or fate; therefore, a "soft break" or a "tough break"; where just "a break" is used it means a good one.
Break (v.) To cause a policeman to be reduced or transferred.
Broad-Jumper (n.) One who abandons his woman. (A "broad" is a female and a "jumper" is a fugitive.)
Bugged Joint (n.) Any place protected by burglar alarms or wired for alarms by private detective agency systems.
Bujok (n.) A Central European, such as a Bohemian, Czech, Hungarian, Roumanian. (Var.: Bohunk.)
Bum steer (n.) False information.
Burn up (v.) To anger.
Button (n.) The point of the chin, vulnerable to a single blow.
Buzz (v.) To question and cross-question. (Also to telephone to.)

Cadge (v.) To beg or wheedle.
Can (n.) Jail or small-town calaboose.
Canary (n.) Prisoner.
Candle (v.) To burn up—get angry. (Var.: To needle.)
Canvass (n.) A line of talk to soften up a prospect for a swindle or racket; canvassing is also referred to as "educating" the victim.
Capper (n.) Similar to a "shill." More comprehensive, however, taking in any operator who serves to make a potential racket more attractive to a chosen victim. The process is known as "Softening up a sap."

Carrying the Banner—Down and Out.
Caser (n.) One dollar. ("Case-note" is a $1 bill.) (Var.: "Frogskin," or "Ace.")
Cat (n.) A prostitute; a house of ill fame is a cathouse (also crib.
Charged up (adj.) Full of dope.
Cheaters (n.) Eye-glasses.
Chiseler (n.) One who will play the measliest of rackets and be satisfied with the chips and dust.
Chopper (n.) Machine gunner.
City College—The Tombs.
Clean (adj.) Broke.
Clean (adj.) Within the law.
Clink (n.) Jail.
Clip (v.) To kill. (Var.: Croak, get, settle, knock off, bump off—the last means with firearms only.) Also to rob or defeat.
Clown (n.) Rube sheriff.
Cluck (n.) A sucker.
Coal-oil Johnny (n.) A spender.
C.O.D. Boy (n.) A crook made inefficient because he falls for the frails. (Origin: "C.O.D."—"Crushed on Dames.") (A man unusually successful with girls is called a "Chicken butcher.")
Coffin (n.) A cell.
Coffin Varnish (n.) Deleterious hooch.
Cokey (n.) A user of cocaine.
Cold turkey (n.) Definite statement of fact.
Collat (n.) Anything negotiable.
Come clean (exc.) To tell it all honestly. (Var.: "Come through.")
Cooky (n.) Sweetheart.
Cop (v.) To get or steal or take.
Copesettee (adj.) Safe, O.K., all right. (Origin: This is an old stand-by of hotel sneak-thieves which has lately become of general use in all crookdom. In the Palmer House, Chicago, there was a big settee, and when the house detective (cop) sat there, he couldn't see the stairs or elevators. Its significance, therefore, was "The cop's on the settee.")
Cowboy (n.) One quick to shoot.
Crack (n.) A remark, instances: "He wise-cracked," or "He cracked out of turn."
Croak (v.) To kill. Also to die (intransitive.) (Var.: To put away.)
Croaker (n.) A physician or surgeon.
Cut up (v.) To divide the loot. (Var.: Divvy, split.)

Cutting Second. Taking unfair advantage.

Dead-pan (adj.) Revealing no expression. (Good poker-face.)
Deemer (n.) Dime.
De Wolf Hopper's Wedding Rings (n.) Brass Knuckles. (They have five holes for fingers; Hopper was married five times.)
Dick (n.) A plain clothes police officer.
Dip (n.) Pickpocket. (Var.: Booster, stripper. A dip who robs a woman is a "moll-buzzer.")
Dirt (n.) Scandal or exposure. (Disseminating such news is "Dishing the dirt.")
Ditch (v.) To lose or dispose of or rid one's self of a person or thing.
Dog it (v.) To get cold feet, turn coward.
Dogs (n.) Feet.
Doing the Houdini—Getting out of a tight place.
Doormat (n.) Coward.
Double team (v.) To close in on one victim, two enemies coming at him from two sides simultaneously.
Drag (n.) Influence ("pull"). Also a gathering of effeminate men; also a partner for a party, such as "She's my drag tonight," or "I'm dragging with her," etc.
Drink (n.) Ocean. (Var.: Pond.)
Ducat (n.) Ticket. (Var. Skull.)
Duck soup (n.) Anything easy and enjoyable and profitable.
Dukes (n.) Hands.
Dump (n.) A place, usually a low resort. (Var.: Dive, joint.)
Dutch (n.) The Dutch is suicide. Also "CKX," the telegraph code symbol for the word. Sometimes expressed "Taking the Dutch route."
Dynamite (n.) Anything dangerous. Also cocaine.

Edge (n.) An advantage.

Fall (n.) An arrest. ("Taking a fall" is submitting to arrest. "Fall dough" is a fund a gang has in reserve for defense of its members.) (Var.: "Jam." A crook in custody is "Jammed up." Being arrested and not booked on the police blotter or trial calendar is a "blind jam.")
Fanny (n.) Rump.
Fed up—Disgusted beyond further endurance or patience.
Fido (n.) A trusty in a prison.
Fin—Five. (From Yiddish word for that number, freely pronounced "finnif.")
Fink (n.) Traitor.
Fireproofed (adj.) One who has received the last rites of the church.

Flatfoot (n.) Pedestrian patrolman. (Those patrolling in police cars are called "Lizzie-lousies.")
Floater (n.) One who has no regular home.
Floating (adj.) Anyone under influence of cocaine.
Flock (n.) Plenty—a whole lot. There may be a "flock" of women, money, luck, time, or "boloney."
Floorless dance (n.) A hanging.
Flop (n.) A bed; also as a verb it means to fail.
Foreigner (n.) Any convict serving a social, sexual, or impulsive felony—not a professional criminal for profit.
Fourth of July (n.) Shooting; anything spectacular.
Fox (n.) Fugitive.
Frame (v.) To conspire; sometimes said "frame-up," either as noun or verb.
Frisk (v.) To search.
Front-guy (n.) A man of good appearance and approach who can scout for a tough mob without exciting suspicion.
Front office (n.) Private sanctum of the chief, either of a gang or a city.
1454—Disorderly conduct; number of old Chicago ordinance covering misdemeanor.

Gaff (v.) To cheat.
Gag (n.) A joke; also used similarly as verb.
Gams (n.) Legs.
Gat (n.) A magazine pistol. (Var.: Rod.)
Gee-gaws (n.) Race horses. (Var.: Bangtails.)
Ghoul (v.) To defeat. Perversion of "Goal."
Gig (n.) Gigolo.
Gimmick—Any contrivance to make a fair transaction or contest unfair.
Giraffe (n.) A curious or nosey person. (Improvement on the "rubberneck" of the 90's.)
Giving the Finger. Cheating. (Var.: To stick.)
Glimmer (n.) A black eye.
Glom (v.) To steal, or to see.
Go Democratic—Unfortunate and unexpected reversal. (If a good result is expected and it turns out all wrong, the job "went Democratic.")
Go down the line—Meaning to go any distance for someone or to accomplish something.
Going South—To "go South" with money or property or even another man's girl is to steal the loot and hide it.
Goldfish (n.) Prisoners in the police line-up where detectives and potential witnesses may observe them without being themselves observed.

Goofer (n.) Gangster. (Perversion of "Gopher," name of a famous old-days New York gang.)
Goofy (adj.) Crazy. The noun is "goof" or "goofus."
Gorilla (n.) A gangster. (NOT "guerilla.")
Grand (n.) $1,000. ("Peaches" Van Camp, an international crook, always carried a $1,000-bill. He said it was impressive where the same amount in smaller currency got nowhere. One day he was telling about the scrapes got out of with $1,000 bills, and as he held one aloft he exclaimed, "Ah, yes, it's a grand note!" Thereafter a $1,000 "William" was a grand note, and now $1,000 is "a grand.")
Grapevine (n.) News that comes through confidential underworld sources without leaking to authorities, enemies, or outsiders.
Grease the Mitt—To pay graft or hush money. Sometimes just "to grease."
Grift (n.) Thievery. Not related to graft, which means proceeds or connivance with crooked authorities. A grifter is a swindler.
Gun (n.) A thief. (Has nothing to do with fire-arms, in fact is used for types of thieves who seldom use any. Origin, contraction of the Yiddish word, "Gunniff," meaning a thief.)
Gun-moll (n.) A thief's woman. (Not a woman who carries a revolver!)
Guts (n.) Courage.
Gyp (v.) To cheat with the aid of confederates or false representations in such a way as to remain within the law.

Handle (n.) A given name.
Hang-out (n.) Rendezvous.
Harness-bull (n.) A uniformed policeman. ("Harness" is uniform.)
Haywire (adj.) Crazy.
Heater (n.) Cigar.
Heavy-worker (n.) Safe-blower. (Var.: O'Sullivan, Muzzler.)
Heel (n.) A contemptible person.
Heeled (adj). Armed.
Heeler (n.) Small politician.
Heinie (n.) A German.
Hell (n.) Trouble, grief. Instance: "I got plenty of hell with her."
Hep (adj.) Aware, wise to, cognizant of. Instance: "He's hep to our plans."
He Pulled a Knife on Me—Designating a false alibi or de-

fense. Originated with a story about a saloonkeeper on Twenty-second Street, Chicago, on whom some gamblers played a slick trick, bringing in a well-dressed dead body and setting it in a chair with the derby over the eyes as a "stew" and ordering champagne; they said the drunk would pay when he came to; the saloonkeeper waited, demanded, threatened, and then brought a bungstarter down on the derby. The "stiff" slumped to the floor. The gamblers rushed in, laid ears to his heart and cried "My God—you killed him!" And the saloonkeeper cried "Self defense—he pulled a knife on me!"

Herring (n.) Incorruptible girl. Herring was the name of the most famous of safes that couldn't be blown.)

Hick (n.) A yokel.

High pressure (adj.) Any method of trimming a chump which requires class, convincing argument, and "front."

Hi-jack (v.) To seize possession of contraband property belonging to another gang, usually by arms in transit.

Hoist (v.) High-class stealing, such as bank robbery or holding up a pay-wagon or registered mail-truck.

Hole (n.) The solitary confinement dungeon in a penitentiary.

Hooey (n.) Bunk.

Hoodlum (n.) A gangster. (Now frequently abbreviated to "Hood," pronounced like the first syllable of "hoodlum.")

Hook-up (n.) Combination.

Hop (n.) Morphine. (A hypodermic for injecting the drug is a "hop-gun," and an addict is a "hop-head.")

Hot (adj.) Anything important, strong, worth-while, or highly acceptable.

Hot (adj.) Anything stolen. (Instances: stolen diamonds are "hot ice," a stolen car is a "hot scooter," stolen property in quantity is "stew" or a "hot mess."

Hot and bothered (adj.) Excited, overenthusiastic.

Hot squat (n.) The electric chair.

Hot Hell (n.) Enthusiasm. (Hungry, greedy.)

Hustler (v.) Prostitute. (Also a racketeer.)

Ice (n.) Diamonds.

In (n.) *See* "Out"—this is the antithesis. (Instance: "I've got an in with the Chief.")

In the Bag (adj.) Any result which has been "fixed" in advance, irrespective of its merits, such as an arrest where police have secretly agreed to release the person, a trial where the judge or jury have been "squared," or a crooked race or prize-fight of which the outcome is certain.

In the Clear—Safe after danger of disaster has passed.

In the Money—Doing well.

In the Red—Losing money on a venture.

Jackroll (v.) To go through the pockets of a disabled, drunken, or sleeping man.
Jerv (n.) Vest pocket.
Jig (n.) Negro. (Var.: dinge, shine, smoke, boogie.
Jim (v.) To ruin or destroy or put out of commission.
John Law (n.) Policeman.
Jug (n.) A prison. Also a bank. As a verb, to imprison.
Jump the Fence—To forfeit a bail-bond and escape.
Jungle (n.) Any place except in a big city. Also "Bridgeport," used as meaning any jay town.
Junk (n.) Cocaine. (An addict is a "junky," or is "junked up.")

Keep the Nose Clean—Stay within the law or play honest with the outfit.
Kewey (adj.) Red-headed. (Kew Gardens, L. I., N. Y., enforces by ordinance a red roof on every building. This is a delicious and new gem of argot.)
Keyman (n.) See "Wire." A keyman in a racket is what a "wire" is in a pickpocket, "payoff," or badger operation.
Keyster (n.) A satchel or handbag of any kind.
Kick (n.) Shoe. (Also pocket.)
Kickback (n.) Payment of pro rata of loot; also unexpected and unfavorable result—boomerang.
Kick off (v.) To die.
Knockdown (n.) An introduction.
Knocking at the Door—Taking a dope cure.

Lam (v.) To escape. (Also, as adjective, "On the lam.")
Laugh off (v.) To ridicule or dismiss facetiously.
Laughing soup (n.) Champagne. (Var.: "Giggle water.")
Lay an Egg—To fail completely. (Var.: To pull a bloomer.)
Lay off (v.) To let alone. (Also to be out of work.)
Lay the Hip (v.) Smoke opium.
Left-handed Wife (n.) Kept woman.
Limey (n.) An English tough.
Line (n.) Meaning a system of conversation or action. "He had a hot line," "He slipped over a slick line," "What's your line?" etc.
Loud Speaker (n.) Wife.
Lousy (adj.) Anything or anyone contemptible or hateful.
Lowdown (n.) Reliable inside information of whatever character.
Lush-worker (n.) A low form of pickpocket specializing in robbing drunks.

Mac (n.) A man who lives off a woman's earnings, honest or nefarious ones. (Abbreviation of the French word, "macquero.")
Make (v.) To conquer or win. Usually applied to causing a woman to yield.
McCoy (the) (n.) The genuine article. (This is not a brand name. "Kid" McCoy, the cruel lightweight champion, now serving a life term for murder, was once introduced to a tipsy stranger, who refused to believe it was the champion and called him a liar. When they picked him out of a spittoon and brought him to, he rubbed his head and admitted "You're the real McCoy!" The phrase goes for any kind of commodity now from booze and dope to masterpieces and bonds.)
McGimp (n.) White Slaver.
Mickey Finn (n.) Knockout drops.
Mob (n.) A gang. (Var.: Outfit.)
Mobster (n.) Gangster.
Monicker (n.) A nickname.
Monkey (n.) Chinaman. (Var.: Mustard.)
Moocher (n.) Single-handed thief, usually of low caste. Also a snooper or spy.
Mope (v.) To walk.
Mosey (v.) To move slowly.
Mouthpiece (n.) A lawyer. (Var.: Legaler.)
Mug (v.) To photograph for the rogues' gallery.
Mugg (n.) A simpleton.
Muscle (v.) To force, by blackmail, threats, or violence, a gang into an interest in a business belonging to someone else. (Usually expressed "to muscle in.")
Mule (n.) Alcohol. (Var.: Alky.)
Mush (n.) Mouth. (Var.: "Kisser.")

Nail (v.) To catch.
Nance (n.) Effeminate man. (Var.: Fairy, pansy, faggot—the last often abbreviated to "fag.")
Natural (n.) A seven-year sentence. (The number in craps is called a "natural.")
Needle (v.) To inject a drug. Also to persecute or "ride."
Nip-up (v.) Raising a check.
Noodle (n.) Head. Nose wet. Drunk.
Norton-and-Egan (v.) To abuse, beat up. (Norton and Egan were two "front office dicks" who were so rough and cruel to those they worked on that their names became a by-word—and a verb.
Notch-joint (n.) House of ill fame.

Office (v.) To warn. (Instance: "He officed me to go easy because the bulls are on to the racket.")
Oilcan (n.) A disagreeable person, often applied to a stingy one.
Oke—(exc.) O.K., all right.
One-way-guy (n.) Honest man. (A crook is a "Two-way-guy.")
One-way Pockets—Any stingy person is described as having them—money goes in but never comes out; sometimes they say, "He has fish-hooks in his pockets."
On the Carpet—Being examined by a Chief of Detectives or prosecuting official.
On the Cuff—Living on credit.
On the Erie—A stool-pigeon.
On the Loose—Irresponsible, or out for a good time.
On the Make—Applied to a man seeking to win a girl or vice versa, and also to someone willing to get money by any method.
On the Nut—Loser on a venture. (Var.: In the box, or In the red.)
Out (adj.) Unconscious.
Out (n.) An escape. (Instance: "I've got an out on that rap.")
Overboard (adj.) Beyond the limit—too far gone to recover.

Pack (v.) To carry.
Pan (n.) Face. (Var.: Physog, map, mug.) (As a verb the word means to vilify.)
Paper hanger (n.) A forger.
Pass (n.) A gesture as though to strike a blow.
Pass out (v.) To become unconscious; sometimes stretched to mean to die.
Patriot (n.) Anyone who is sentimental rather than practical.
Pay-off (n.) The wire-tapping swindle. (Of late used to signify any outrageous or fool-captivating act. Sometimes applied to revenge, but then not genuine slang.)
Peanuts (n.) Small money.
Peep (v.) To talk.
Phoney (adj.) Spurious, specious, false.
Piece (n.) A share.
Pig (n.) A chorus girl.
Pigeon (n.) A girl who sits with the driver on the front seat of a rum-runner truck or beside the skipper of a rum-runner power-boat to give it the appearance of respectability and tranquillity.
Pineapple (n.) A small shrapnel bomb which can be held in

one hand, the corrugated surface of which somewhat resembles the Hawaiian fruit.

Pipe off (v.) To watch or spy on.

Plant (n.) A hiding place; also any person placed anywhere under false pretenses and spurious identity.

Plant (v.) To purposely place damaging evidence in a pocket or cell or elsewhere; also to save or put away in a safe hiding place.

Plastered (adj.) Drunk. (Var.: Soused, grinnied, potted, cockeyed, stewed, shicker, woozy, boiled, lit, paralyzed, ossified.)

Play (n.) Overture or approach. (Instance: "He's making a play for her," or "He's making a play for more business.")

Play the field—To go after many chances and easy ones for small profits rather than concentrate on long shots for a big putover.

Plug (n.) Recommendation. (As a verb, to shoot.)

Poke (n.) Purse.

Produce (v.) To deliver, to make good.

Pulling a fast one—Coming suddenly through with an unexpected point or idea or doing the unforeseen at a critical juncture.

Pump (n.) Heart.

Punk (n.) A youth. (In prison slang, the word also means bread.)

Pushover (n.) Anything easy; also a girl who doesn't resist.

Puss (n.) Face.

Put it on the Line (v.) To pay in cash.

Put on the Spot—Lured or decoyed or betrayed to a place where one or more may be murdered with a degree of safety and favorable chances of getaway for the murderers as against being followed or "taken for a ride." Gangsters kill for business and not romance, and they plan their escape in advance.

Put the Finger On—To doom for and sentence to death by gang law.

Queer (n.) Counterfeit money. (Now applied also to spurious liquor.) (Also "degenerate.") (As a verb, to spoil or interfere with.)

Queer shover (n.) A passer of counterfeit money or securities.

Racket (n.) Any method of "muscling in" on a legitimate or illegal business, by force, threats, attack at the buying or selling end, connivance with authorities or with unions.

(Origin: "Big Tim" Murphy, originator of the system and the phrase, stood at the Briggs House bar in Chicago. He was king of his field. "Umbrella Jim" Boyle, a small-fry emulator, came in. Boyle had just organized a minor union for purposes of a "shake." He pointed to a front-page article and boasted: "This is the Big Noise today!" Murphy glanced at it contemptuously and answered, "Big noise, Hell—that's just a racket!")

Rain-check (n.) A parole.

Rap (n.) A complaint or warrant making one subject to arrest and trial. ("To rap" is to lodge or cause same. "A bum rap" is a false charge. Being found not guilty or otherwise wiggling out is "Beating the rap.")

Rat (v.) To confess against brother gangsters or criminals. (The noun "rat" is similarly limited in significance and does not mean just a lowdown man—he must be a traitor to earn the label.)

Rattler (n.) A railroad train. Catching a train is "hopping a rattler."

Rattling the Tin Cup—Informing. (Origin: In most jails the space between bars is narrow and prisoners are provided with long, elliptical tin cups that can slip between them. When one of them wants water he rattles his cup between two bars to attract the guard. The guard comes to his cell. Thus he is known to have been close enough to a "screw" to tell him something, and if it soon turns out that someone has "squealed," the man who rattled the tin cup is suspected.)

Raw (adj.) Uncouth, bold, brazen.

Readers (n.) Marked cards.

Roughneck (n.) Hoodlum.

Ritz (v.) To treat haughtily. (Var.: To high-hat.)

Run (n.) Contest, battle. "We'll give him a run," meaning "We'll fight it out with him."

Runaround (n.) The practice of dodging someone persistently.

Sand (exc.) "Pull up" or "Go easy." (Its significance is "Put sand on the tracks.")

Sap (n.) A blackjack. (Also a boob.)

Savvy—Either noun or verb, meaning understanding. (From the Spanish, sabe.)

Sawbuck (n.) Ten dollars. (The X symbol is the origin of this whimsy. Twenty dollars is a "double sawbuck." These terms are the parents of the slang term "buck" for a dollar.)

Schmoos (n.) Talk, gab, conversation. (From the Yiddish.)
Scoff (v.) To eat.
Sconce (n.) Head. (Var.: Bean, dome, cocoa, block, noodle.)
Scooter (n.) A rum-running truck making long-distance hauls.
Scram (v.) To run away. (Var.: Lam, breeze, blow, beat it, take the gate, take air.)
Scratch (n.) Silver money. Probably a free variant of "chicken-feed."
Screw (n.) A prison-guard. Development of the old slang when a key was a screw.
See (v.) To interview and threaten or influence.
Set-up (n.) Synonomous with "layout," meaning a situation; also an easy mark (*see* "Pushover"); a term borrowed from billiards, where a set-up shot is easy compared to one "left" by an opponent haphazard or deliberately difficult.
Shake-down (v.) To blackmail. (Now often just "Shake.") (Var.: Rattle.)
Shammess (n.) A sheriff or constable. (Origin, Yiddish word for the village peace officer.)
Shapes (n.) Crooked dice. (Var.: Tats.)
Sharpshooter (n.) A thief who prepares, looks his ground over, trails his man, and blueprints his job—contrasted with the criminal of impulse or the devil-may-care operator who takes long chances both with his liberty and the risk of hazarding a long stretch for a crime which could not yield him much if he got away.
Shill (n.) A decoy who acts the victim to lure in a real victim. (Origin: Contraction of old English word, "shillaber.")
Shive (n.) A knife or dagger.
Shonacker (n.) Jew. (Var.: Kike, Yid.)
Shoot (exc.) Speak!
Shoot (n.) A drink of liquor. (Instance: "Pour me a shoot.")
Shoot the roll—Risk everything.
Shove (v.) To distribute. (The member of a gang who delivers bootleg is the shover.)
Showcase (n.) Hearse.
Silk (n.) A swindler.
Six-Two-and-Even—Square odds. (When a horse is listed at 6 to 1, he is 2 to 1 for place, or second position, and even money for show, or third.) When any odds are equitable, they are called "6, 2, and even."
Slant (v.) To watch, observe.
Slat (n.) A bar of a cell or prison.

Slap (n.) An accusation. Usually applied to a charge within a gang rather than to authorities, which is a "rap."
Sleigh-ride (n.) A cocaine orgy. (Cocaine is called "snow," and "reindeer dust.")
Slug (n.) A drink. Also a bullet. As a verb, to attack.
Slum (n.) Prison food. (Origin: "Slumgullion.")
Smear (v.) To bribe.
Smokey (n.) An opium addict. (Var.: Pipey.)
Snowbank (n.) A cocaine resort. (Cocaine is "snow.")
Sock (v.) To strike or hit. (Var.: Bust, wallop, bop, slam, punch.)
Soup (n.) Nitro-glycerin.
Sparrow-cop (n.) A park or boulevard policeman.
Spiel (n.) A routine speech for a purpose.
Spik (n.) A Spaniard, Cuban, or South American. (From "I no spik English.")
Spit up (v.) To confess. (Usually, "He spit up his guts.")
Split-case (adj.) Any deal involving less than twelve bottles. (Now used to describe anything or anybody qualified as a "piker.")
Split out (v.) To separate, usually by deliberate act, so that each can be beaten or killed or robbed separately.
Spring (v.) To release from custody.
Squawk (v.) To complain. (Var.: Belch, beef, belly-ache, bleat, yawp.)
Squeal (v.) To inform either the police or a rival gang.
Stall (n.) A member of a gang who interferes with or distracts an intended victim so the others can work more freely; also used as a verb, meaning to procrastinate or slow up.
Stanch (v.) To park or leave somewhere. (Instance: "I stanched the car around the corner," or "I had Bill stanched at the door, etc."
Stash (n.) Meeting place.
Steam up (v.) To anger or deliberately infuriate.
Step (v.) To move rapidly or do something unusual.
Stiegen (exc.) "Look out!" (Origin: German word, meaning "Be quiet!")
Stiff (n.) A corpse. (As a verb, drunk.)
Stir (n.) A penitentiary. At San Quentin, the largest "pen" in the world, it was the system to move the men about every month so they wouldn't get too chummy and couldn't conspire together. That was called "the stir." The institution became so known, and now any State prison is. (Var.: Big house.) (Sing Sing is "Up the River.")
Stooge (n.) A novitiate, a tyro, the word being a perversion of "student." (Var.: "Choir-boy"—origin of this, the

stooge holds a flashlight while his superiors operate whatever they are at, and choir-boys hold candles. (Var.: Gay-cat.)

Stop Ticket (n.) A warrant awaiting a released convict.

Strapped—Broke, out of funds.

Stretch (n.) A penitentiary sentence. (Var.: bit.) A convict "does a stretch" or "gets a stretch" or, if he is acquitted, "beats a stretch." (Var.: Hitch.)

Strong (adj.) Crooked. An unfair gambling-house is a "strong joint."

Strong Arm (v.) To overcome a victim by crooking the arm around the front of his neck from behind, an almost unbreakable hold.

Sugar (n.) Money. (Var.: Kale, dough, jack, or the latest whimsy, "plenty pennies.") Also a pet name.

Sweeny—A mythical character typifying a fool. (Inst.: "Tell it to Sweeny," or, of a losing horse, "He ran for Sweeny." The antithesis is the famous Reilly of "Living the life of Reilly," meaning the best of everything.

Sweet Pea (n.) An easy victim or easy situation.

Tag (n.) Name.

Tail (v.) To follow.

Take (v.) To trim, hornswoggle, suckerize.

Take a runout powder—To abandon a project or partners or otherwise flee responsibilities or promises.

Take it—Ability to resist or stand punishment. One who gives in easily "Can't take it," and one who can survive hardships and blows and keep on going "can take it."

Take-joint (n.) A gyp cabaret or a gimmicked gambling-house.

Taken for a Ride—Lured or forced into an auto and driven out to a secluded or remote or otherwise potentially safe place for a getaway where the victim can be killed (*see* "Put on the Spot").

Tank (n.) Small town.

Tart (n.) A loose woman.

Taxi (n.) A 5-to-15 year sentence.

T. B. (n.) A confidence man. He was known as a "con," which is also the short for consumption, which is tuberculosis, for which the short is "T. B."

That boat has sailed—It's too late.

That way (adj.) In love. When telling it pretty, a man or woman is "That way in a big way."

The book (n.) A life sentence. (Var.: From now on.)

The goods (n.) Evidence; "getting the goods on—" means finding out things that will condemn or convict him.

The Works (n.) Everything complete or the limit of anything. (Var.: The Book. Also see "Book.")
There (adj.) Efficient. (Instance: "He's there forty ways," or "That proposition is there!")
Third rail (n.) An incorruptible official. (Origin: "You can't touch him.")
Tin star (n.) Private detective.
Tip-and-Toss (n.) Any swindling operation in which a "shill" or "capper" is employed.
Tip off (v.) To "wise up" or inform.
Tocker (n.) A murderer. The heart goes "tick, tock." The last it says is its final "tock." Therefore the murderer is the tocker.
Torch Song (n.) Lament over a woman. (Var.: Bleat, Singing the blues.)
Trick (n.) Any crooked enterprise. Usually said "turning a trick."
Trim (v.) To slug or beat up. A slugging or beating is a "trimming.")
Trim (v.) To swindle, "take," suckerize.
Trip (n.) A third conviction.
Turkey (n.) Irishman. (Also the truth, as "We talked turkey," or the unvarnished truth, "He told me, cold turkey.")
Turn copper—To give information to authorities.
Twist (n.) Girl. (Var.: Moll, broad, floozy, frail, chippy, jane, doll, skirt, number, mama.)
Two-time (v.) To play traitor to one (man or woman) while working or loving with another, unknown to the first.
Typewriter (n.) Machine gun. (Var.: Lawnmower.)

Up-and-up (adj.) Anything that is honest—strictly on the level. (Origin: Showing the hole-card in stud poker.)

Vag (v.) To arrest for vagrancy. (Instance: "I was vagged by the bulls.")
Vamp (v.) To leave.
Velvet (n.) Profit—something scarcely anticipated.

Washed up—Through, ready to quit.
Weazel (n.) A private detective. (Var.: Tin-star dick or Pink—the latter obviously an abbreviation of Pinkerton, but now applied to operatives of any aggressive agency.) Also "Eye."
Welch (v.) To run out on an agreement or withhold payment on a wager.
Whisper (n.) Speak-easy.

White (adj.) Trustworthy.
White-haired boy—A favorite.
Wild-wave Jockey (n.) A rum-runner who transports stuff by water.
William (n.) A bill of large denomination.
Wire (n.) The actual operator of a gang, such as the man who seizes the money in a pickpocket, stick-up, or burglary job.
Wired In—Fixed with the political powers.
Wise dough (n.) Money bet by insiders on a fixed race or game.
Wooden Kimono (n.) Coffin.
Wop (n.) An Italian. (Var.: Guinea, Greaseball, Dago.)
Wow (n.) Something extraordinary. (By the same token, the verb "to wow" means to astonish or highly impress.)

Yap (n.) A boob. (Var.: Spadie.)
Yard (n.) A hundred dollars. (Var.: Century.) A $100-bill is known as a C-note.
Yegg (n.) A bank robber.
Yellow-belly (n.) Coward.
Yen (n.) An intense craving or desire. (From the Chinese word "Yenhok," meaning a passion for opium.)
Yid (n.) Jew.

Zipper (v.) To shut something up, principally the mouth. (Instance: "Zipper your mush!")

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